

DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE AND PRACTICE IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Readers, Reading, and Reception



Edited by
Kathryn Vulić, Susan Uselmann, and C. Annette Grisé

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PRACTICE IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

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INTRODUCTION

DEVOTIONAL READING IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND: PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

Susan Uselmann

I pray almyty God that this booke com not but to the hands of them that will be his faithfull lovers, and to those that will submitt them to the feith of Holy Church and obey the holesom understandyng and teching of the men that be of vertuous wisdom; wherfore it may not dwelle with him that is thrall to synne and to the devill. And beware thu take not on thing after thy affection and liking and leve another, for that is the condition of an heretique. But take everything with other. And trewely understanden, all is according to Holy Scripture and growndid in the same.

Explicit to Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*, c. 1415

This volume of the *Disputatio* series focuses on changing conceptions of medieval readers and devotional reading in late medieval England. As a contribution to the history of reading, it also seeks to reconsider or expand some of the dichotomies that often characterize analyses of devotional readers and reading, such as author/reader, literate/illiterate, learned/'lewd', Latin/vernacular, or clerical/lay. The famous scribal *explicit* to Julian of Norwich's *Revelations* highlights the dynamic and often unstable categories of author, text, and reader which relate to this subject. Late medieval England, in particular, witnessed extraordinary change and growth in these categories, as an

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efflorescence in devotional writing converged with a burgeoning book market and an increasing number of the laity who could be considered literate. With vernacular texts likely to reach a wider audience, devotional writers increasingly sought to control the ways readers interacted with text and to represent readers as idealized, pious members of the church. The scribal *explicit* thus constructs a humble reader who will 'obey the holesom understandyng and teching of the men that be of vertuous wisdam' and 'take everything with other' as s/he reads. The depiction of an obedient reader highlights an important premise of this volume and of reader studies in general: that representations of reading and readers are often idealized as they are shaped to suit the needs of particular historical circumstances.

Moreover, because he is not in fact the author of 'this booke', the scribe also belies the wide range of practices that can constitute even a specific rhetorical circumstance. Like many devotional writers, the scribe imagines an obedient and pious reader, but he is also deeply aware of the multiplicity of historical audiences, and the textual instability inherent in a culture in which works that have been initially created for one audience could be adapted, abbreviated or revised to serve another.¹ He cautions the audience to 'beware' of certain reading practices that 'take [...] on thing after thy affection and likyng and leve another'. In his dual function as writer and reader, he mediates between the fictionalized audience and the meditative tradition that informs this contemplative work, making a rhetorical move that would be familiar to modern reader and reception theorists. Michel de Certeau asserts that a 'text has meaning only through its readers; it changes along with them; it is ordered in accord with codes of perception that it does not control. It becomes a text only in its relation to the exteriority of the reader'.² As witness to the potency of the 'exteriority of the reader' and the changing 'codes of perception' in late medieval England, the extant manuscripts of Julian's text reveal a surprisingly wide range of devotional and literate practices. Whether it is the late fourteenth-century contemplative tradition evidenced in the Short Version, or the outgrowth of 'vernacular theology' reflected in the Long Version, or the excerpts selected and placed alongside Walter Hilton in a sixteenth-century *florilegium*, the *Revelations* cannot

¹ As Alexandra Gillespie reminds us, 'English texts produced in or for religious contexts do not reflect a static or stable culture. They reveal the unfixed boundaries of lay and clerical worlds and deal in both orthodoxy and dissent. They retained their capacity to change, as well as reinforce, the attitudes of those who encountered them' ('Production and Dissemination', p. 110).

² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 170–71, quoted in Chartier, *The Order of Books*, p. 2.

be viewed simply as an authored, autonomous work; rather, it is the product of changing attitudes and practices of textual culture in late medieval England.³ And while the 1415 scribe cautioned against heretical misreading in favour of a hermeneutics of faithful simplicity, the 1500 compiler performed the act of reading on behalf of a very different reading community, using a scholastic method and suggesting that conceptions of lay readers may need to overlap with those of readers who were spiritually advanced in the contemplative life.⁴ In this context, the compiler assuages very differently the anxiety about proper reading revealed in the epigraph.

The tension between authorial control and the audience's reception illustrated by the epigraph is central to modern reception theory, but it finds an especially reader-oriented expression in the vast generic category called 'medieval devotional literature'.⁵ Based on the number of extant manuscripts, excerpts, and interpolations, these works far surpass virtually all other types of literature owned by or circulated among medieval men and women, religious and lay alike, and thus this category constitutes a significant witness to the culture of devotional practice. As Mary Erler pointedly states, 'to a substantial extent, devotional reading was everyone's reading'.⁶ Indeed, the ubiquity of this literature among medieval audiences precludes any definition of its generic boundaries in the conventional sense.⁷ Yet for the essays in this volume, and indeed

³ Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', pp. 637–83.

⁴ The published assessments of the compilation (London, Westminster Cathedral Treasury, MS 4) have reached, as Windeatt has pointed out, 'contradictory conclusions about its intended audience' ('Constructing Audiences for Contemplative Texts', pp. 159–71). Windeatt himself points to internal evidence for a 'spiritually advanced audience — probably among female religious' ('1412–1534: Texts', p. 207). On the contemplative strain in the compiler's choices, see Cr  , "'This blessed beholdyng"', pp. 116–80. In contrast, Kempster asserts the possibility that the Westminster text was written for an active lay audience ('A Question of Audience', pp. 257–89). Watson and Jenkins take a contextual approach, suggesting that readers may have been interested in the connections between Julian's text and the orthodox theology of Walter Hilton (*The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 418). See also Dutton, *Julian of Norwich*.

⁵ Gillespie points to the significance of this tension in anonymous works in particular. See 'Anonymous Devotional Writings', pp. 127–49, and 'Vernacular Books of Religion', pp. 317–44. For a consideration of the genre as 'popular', see Newhauser, 'Religious Writing', pp. 37–55. For understanding its relationship to Latin textual culture, see Hexter and Townsend, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*.

⁶ Erler, 'Devotional Literature', p. 495.

⁷ The most important starting point for understanding the range of works in this category is still Doyle's doctoral thesis, *A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings in*

for scholars of devotional reading in general, such ambiguity is an invitation to examine and expand the categories used for analysis. Devotional writings in both Latin and the vernacular tongues encompassed a wide variety of forms, ranging from liturgical works such as breviaries, books of hours, psalters, and prayer books, to texts of spiritual counsel and theological, contemplative or inspirational works — indeed, the literature intended to serve as a guide to living spiritually offers an embarrassment of riches to scholars. The essays in this volume likewise reference an eclectic assortment of works, from texts of dogmatic and moral theology, such as the *Speculum vitae* and *Dives and Pauper*, to scriptural paraphrase and exegesis, such as Lollard versions of the Gospels, Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, or *The Mirror for Devout People*; some of the essays here make reference to devotional and ascetical theology, such as pious meditations or maxims like *The Mirror of Sinners*, or translated works, such as William Flete's *Remedies against Temptations*, *Pricking of Love*, or *Mirror of Simple Souls*. Other essays discuss meditations on the lives of holy men and women, or native English works, such as the works of Walter Hilton, or rule books like the *Ancrene Wisse*.⁸ In the genre of the history of reading, the process of analysis is often kaleidoscopic, reflecting the complex, dynamic and often *ad hoc* nature of reading in the later Middle Ages, while reminding us of the need to historicize the act of reading.⁹ An important premise of this volume of essays is thus that it is more revealing to define what devotional literature *does* rather than what it *is*.¹⁰

Our use of the term 'reader' as a category for analysis takes its primary cue not only from reader theory but also from the history of monasticism, where it assumes a specialized meaning quite distinct from the sociological sense implied in de Certeau's formulation.¹¹ Spiritual reading was central to monastic

English and Jolliffe's *A Checklist of Middle English Prose Writings of Spiritual Guidance*. See also Lewis, Blake, and Edwards, *Index of Printed Middle English Prose*.

⁸ Categories from Doyle, *A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings in English*.

⁹ On the tension between universalist and historicist approaches to reading, see Stock, 'Afterword', pp. 270–75. For an anthology of prologues that bear witness to this tension, see Wogan-Browne and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular*.

¹⁰ As Paul Strohm reminds us, the notion of *genre* is not a fixed, aesthetic category so much as a 'set of intermediate rules or instructions which assist the reader in rightly interpreting a literary work' (Strohm, 'Middle English Narrative Genres', p. 63).

¹¹ Robertson, *Lectio Divina*; also Cavallo and Chartier, eds, *A History of Reading in the West*, in particular the essays in that volume on medieval reading practices by Parkes, Hamesse, and Saenger. The editors are using the term 'reader' for its etymological and didactic resonances.

praxis from the time of the Benedictine Rule, which equated *lectio divina* with manual labour and required monks to read at least one book per year.¹² But ‘reading’ in this early context did not refer to a private or silent practice involving the decoding of Latin letters; it involved ‘the participation of the whole body and the whole mind’, as the monastic historian Jean LeClercq famously demonstrated in his seminal study on medieval monastic life. Leclercq depicts the monk praying or chanting the Bible throughout the day, with supplementary books and music serving as an aid to inscribe the sacred text on his heart: ‘The memory, fashioned wholly by the Bible and nurtured entirely by biblical words and the images they evoke, causes [monks] to express themselves spontaneously in biblical vocabulary.’¹³ In this way, reading constituted an act of devotion that was carried out in a particular ‘textual community’ which, while associated with literate practices, did not necessitate the existence of actual books.¹⁴ Indeed, although many early monks who entered the monastery were unlettered, they nevertheless shaped their minds into a kind of concordance of the Bible, a ‘living library’ designed to facilitate a life of constant prayer.¹⁵ As these monastic models were later adapted and revised for vernacular readers, devotional texts similarly cultivated a spiritual interiority, a space and place of introspection, self-examination, and prayer.¹⁶ In doing so, they revealed a deep

It has been pointed out that, ‘from a historicist point of view, “audience” is thus often a more satisfactory term than “reader” for the period 1280–1520, embracing, as it does, more of the range of participants in textual culture’ (Wogan-Browne and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 109). From *audire*, the term ‘audience’ implies an acoustical experience which is consistent with the general experience of medieval textual culture; from a sociolinguistic point of view, however, the term ‘reader’, from *raedan*, suggests overtones that are particularly appropriate to devotional texts, since it is associated etymologically with ‘to counsel, advise’. On this association in early Christian hermeneutics see Parkes, ‘*Raedan, areccan, smeagan*’.

¹² Benedict of Nursia, *Rule of St Benedict*, chap. 48, pp. 160–63. On the significance of *lectio* in late medieval devotion, see Gillespie, ‘Lukying in Holy Bokes’.

¹³ Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, p. 75. Perhaps the most influential examination of monastic education, Leclercq’s text explores the interdisciplinary nature of monastic pedagogical and reading practices, including their poetic, liturgical, biblical, scholastic resonances.

¹⁴ The term ‘textual communities’ was coined by Brian Stock. In Stock’s formulation, ‘one of the clearest signs that a group has passed the threshold of literacy was the lack of necessity for the organizing text to be spelt out, interpreted or reiterated. The members all knew what it was’ (*Implications of Literacy*, p. 91).

¹⁵ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p. 77.

¹⁶ See Bryan, *Looking Inward*.

and abiding tension between the ‘exteriority of the reader’ in the secular world and the interior landscape associated with the sacred goal of salvation. Over the course of the later Middle Ages, readers and textual communities negotiated these spaces in varied ways, using their books and devotions to mark their spiritual identities. Both historical monastic practices and evolving concepts of holy living informed these identities as reading became a central praxis of the devout subject.¹⁷

This volume consists of an introduction, nine essays, and an afterword; its overall aim is to highlight the variegated spectrum of reading practices involved in devotional literacy, while historicizing the individual writers, copiers, translators, and printers who sought to mediate the tension between the reader’s interior landscape and the exterior circumstances of the text’s reception. From 1100 to 1536, the span of years considered here, the roles of readers and writers fluctuate and morph dramatically, but bear witness to continual efforts to negotiate, clarify, or obscure the categories that define devotional reading. The bulk of the volume, excepting the afterword, is divided into three parts. The first section, ‘Representations of Reading’, explores the conceptual frameworks used by writers to represent and define reading. While often relying on dichotomies such as ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ reading, religious writers typically espoused, subverted or rewrote these concepts to suit the circumstances of their texts. The essays in this section highlight the ways in which seemingly clear binaries, such as *letter/spirit*, *literate/illiterate*, *orthodox/heterodox*, *Latin/vernacular*, or *learned/‘lewd’*, could be promulgated, repurposed, or deliberately obscured by writers to create a cluster of representations for reading processes. The second section, ‘The Practice of Reading’, is concerned with locating the specific circumstances that defined what Hans Robert Jauss termed the ‘horizon of expectations’ between readers and writers. It begins with an examination of the monastic office and liturgical reading, and highlights the various ways in which monastic practices changed as they intersected with questions about community, lay literacy, vernacularity, and heterodoxy in late medieval England. Highlighting in particular the importance of communal identity, these essays reveal that certain aspects of monastic reading practices remained surprisingly predominant even as the lay appetite for spiritual guidance continued to grow.¹⁸ The third sec-

¹⁷ Recent scholarship on this tension includes Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline in Middle English Literature*; Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England*; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St. Albans*; Ferzoco and Muessig, eds, *Medieval Monastic Education*; Sargent, *De cella in seculum*.

¹⁸ On new views of the historical significance of Arundel’s constitutions, see the recent col-

tion, 'Modelling Readers', examines the ways in which works were adapted and transformed for new audiences, and women in particular, as the act of reading vernacular religious works became a prevalent pastime.¹⁹ The role of gender as a category for analysis is particularly important in these essays, which examine a period during the Lancastrian and early Tudor monarchy when devotional reading was increasingly influenced by the individual authors, printers, owners, and powerful patrons who mediated or circulated devotional texts. Exploring the blurry line between author and reader, these essays highlight another premise of reception theory, namely Jauss's claim that 'in the triangle of author, work and public the last is no passive part, no chain of mere reactions, but rather itself an energy formative of history'.²⁰

The inherent nature of any study of readers and reading transcends inclusion within a single discipline. Thus, although the intersecting disciplines of religious and literary history form the basis of the essays in this collection, the volume as a whole strives to look beyond those disciplines to allow for other perspectives: they consider various aspects of medieval manuscript and book history, heresy and orthodoxy, monasticism and lay piety, hermeneutics and exegesis, education and literacy, translation and authority, and gender and identity. In structuring the volume, moreover, the editors sought to encourage our own readers' associative play — to make connections between Anna Lewis's use of the term 'bad' in her title, and Kathryn Vulić's exploration of 'lewd' in her essay, for instance; or between Christina Carlson's use of 'profit' and the 'prouffyte' in the title of Stephanie Morley's contribution. Seen through this multifaceted lens, a study of reading and readers can illuminate the ways in which our under-

lection of essays edited by Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*.

¹⁹ Scholarship that traces the emergence of a culture of reading in late medieval England now has a rich history, and a few examples must suffice here. For an excellent overview, see *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vols II and III. An indispensable work is Meale, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, in particular the essay by Riddy, "Women Talking about the Things of God", pp. 104–27. See also Hutchison, 'Devotional Reading in the Monastery and the Late Medieval Household', pp. 215–17; Krug, *Reading Families*; Gunn and Innes-Parker, eds, *Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care*, in particular the essays by Grisé, 'Prayer, Meditation and Women Readers in Late Medieval England', pp. 178–92, and Barratt, "'Take a Book and Read'", pp. 193–208.

²⁰ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 19. Jauss continues: 'The historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees. For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing "horizon-of-experience" of a continuity in which the perpetual inversion occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production that surpasses them'. On this issue, see also Schoff, *Reformations*.

standing of religion, history, and the literature of the period may be influenced by the medium of language and our interpretation of systems of textual production, as well as by the poetic, imaginative and often slippery relationship between author, text, and audience. As the editors of *The Idea of the Vernacular* point out, 'audiences are born (and reborn) somewhere between authorial desire, the desires of actual historical audiences, and the cultural and linguistic possibilities that shape acts of reading'.²¹ Or, to put it another way, historical readers and idealized readers are always intertwined. The contributors to this volume have examined closely the ways in which religious writers and translators — often monks or clergy, but increasingly women and the social elite — document, instruct, or circumscribe readers, the act of reading, and the paths of production and reception. In doing so, they raise a series of questions that thread through this volume. How does reading constitute an act of devotion? How do devotional reading practices intersect with broader issues of vernacularity, heterodoxy, education, and literacy? What happens to the inherited traditions of a work when later interpretive communities mediate the paths of its reception? In a generalized answer to these questions, the essays in this volume suggest that even as writers sought to extend the boundaries of literate practice, and to define and clarify the act of devotional reading for specific audiences and contexts, what they produced over time was a devotional culture associated with a spectrum of literary practices. Paradoxically, these practices ultimately resisted such definition as they came to exploit the powerful systems of patronage, power and spiritual capital that characterized late medieval England.

Representations of Reading

The first section of the volume, titled 'Representations of Reading', explores a key conceptual framework for defining devotional reading: the relationship between devotional reading and Latinity, which came to the fore in the later Middle Ages as scriptural reading shifted from the domain of monks to that of schoolmen.²² In its debt to Latinity, the practices of medieval reading, medi-

²¹ Wogan Browne and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 111.

²² Zieman, *Singing the New Song*. Zieman charts the process by which liturgical reading, with the establishment of the university 'song schools' (*scola cantus*), came to be associated with grammar skills such as 'familiarity with letters, syllables, and their phonemic values' (33). Studies of the influence of the universities are too numerous to list here, but two useful references include Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* and Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*. For the scholastic influence on notions of reading, writing, authorship, and literacy,

tation, and prayer bore the vestigial marks of an educational program that had persisted from antiquity — that is, the study of Latin grammar — which devotional writers repurposed as a tool for salvation.²³ Works like Hugh of St Victor's *De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestororum* suggested a link between the elementary act of memorizing the psalter and advanced hermeneutics of scholars, and this correlation persisted into the fourteenth century.²⁴ The historical backdrop of the first section of this volume is the process by which two monastic practices, *lectio divina* and biblical exegesis, became intertwined as a measure of devotional literacy. Both of these approaches implied that the reader begin with a literal understanding and progress through increasingly difficult stages of the reading process; and devotional writers drew on a host of associations to define the practice of 'reading literally'. The essays in the first section of this volume suggest that the construction of devotional readers as practitioners in hermeneutics plays a key role in late medieval questions about Bible translation and lay access to religious texts in the vernacular.

Whether the simple or unlearned reader could 'know' God was a tenet that struck at the core of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century concerns over heterodoxies such as Wycliffism and Franciscan Joachimism.²⁵ In what has been called the 'crisis of the literal sense',²⁶ the definition of the 'carnal' or 'naked text' became multivalent and constantly shifting — a fact which, as Anna Lewis points out, allowed Lollard writers to draw on the same terms and passages as their opponents. In particular, Paul's articulation in II Corinthians 3. 6 that 'the letter kills, but the spirit gives life' became a vehicle for reclaiming the core tenets of exegesis and asserting an identifiably Lollard conception of the 'right reader'. Emphasizing the reader's personal piety and humility, the Lollards insisted on a direct correlation between the reader's inner worth and the correct interpretation of scripture. Thus, although both sides of the debate maligned 'literal' reading in the vein of St Paul, Lollard writers referred to those who read with a stubborn heart — notably, the friar doctors — rendering the

see Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent*; Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*; and Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*.

²³ Parkes, 'Reading, Copying, Interpreting'; Reynolds, *Medieval Reading*.

²⁴ Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals and Dissent*; Copeland, 'Childhood, Pedagogy and the Literal Sense'.

²⁵ Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*; Somerset, Havens, and Pitard, eds, *Lollards and their Influence in Late Medieval England*; Cole, *Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer*; Lutton, *Lollard and Orthodox Religion in Pre-Reformation England*.

²⁶ Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals and Dissent*, p. 54.

act of reading a 'mere physical act' that was infused with a personal agenda and corrupted by worldly concerns. Because they privileged the allegorical level of interpretation articulated in the commentaries, these readers, according to Lewis, were deemed 'literalists' who corrupted the basis of *lectio divina* as it was originally envisioned.

The similarity between the Lollard and anti-Lollard views of reading highlighted in Lewis's essay underscores the breadth and diversity that characterized medieval reading practices among the urban elite in late medieval England. Books like *The Holi Prophet David Seith* might express Lollard sympathies but they often circulated — as this one most likely did — among devout readers of the merchant class, and alongside orthodox works like *Pore Caityf* and Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*. As Andrew Taylor points out, 'book distribution was an instrument of religious education for both the church and its opponents and the lines between the two sometimes blurred'.²⁷ While both sides recognized book distribution as a form of social control — a volatile link illustrated dramatically in the burning of Bishop Reginald Pecock's books in 1457 — they disagreed deeply about the role of these books in the life of the laity.

Indeed, the history of devotional literature is one that replicates and revisits the shifting binary of lay and cleric, beginning and advanced, or 'lewd' and 'learned' in a variety of ways. As Kathryn Vulić reveals in her essay on *Speculum vitae*, it was the catechetical instruction of official prayers like the Pater Noster, omnipresent in medieval devotional culture, that formed the crucial link. *Speculum vitae* uncouples the act of reading from the realm of erudite scholarship, aligning it more obliquely with hermeneutical processes of 'unpacking' the meaning of a text, object, or concept. This re-definition focuses more on intellectual engagement than on literacy, and proposes that 'lewd' listening audiences might be able to achieve the same wisdom and insights (at least in their ability to understand the Pater Noster) as a highly trained cleric, so long as these audiences learn how to analyse and interpret the words they hear. As Vulić points out, by the time of *Speculum vitae*, the main qualification for engaging intellectually with spiritual material seems to be only that the audience *hear and understand* English — not that they *read* it. Devotional works regularly came to blur the distinction between clerical and lay reading practices, even as they tried to clarify this distinction.²⁸

²⁷ Taylor, 'Authors, Scribes, Patrons and Books,' p. 360. For a long view of the uncertainty created by this situation, see the volume of essays edited by Chuilleanáin and Flood, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in Early English Literature, 1350–1680*.

²⁸ The scholarship on this fascinating phenomenon is compendious, but several studies

One important outgrowth of the Lollard movement was that it highlighted deep inconsistencies in pastoral views about the laity's religious education. In *Dives and Pauper* — a lengthy treatise described by its editor as a combination of theology with 'social commentary, folklore, iconography, witchcraft, warfare, and trade'²⁹ — these inconsistencies become particularly pronounced. As Elizabeth Schirmer points out in this section's third essay, the dialogue between a wealthy, educated listener and a 'poor preacher' brings together a number of traditions inherited by late medieval religious writers — not only intellectual, hermeneutic, and interpretive approaches, but also meditative and affective models of reading. But rather than engaging in the Lollard controversy by defining and clarifying these traditions, Schirmer argues, *Dives and Pauper* 'walk[s] a careful *via media* between increasingly polarized Lollard and anti-Lollard positions', maintaining a strategic ambiguity and insisting throughout that '[r]eading and signification are properly multiple, operating on several levels at once, and capable of opening out onto a potentially infinite field of meaning'. As Schirmer points out, it is notable that the wealthy 'lewd' reader is corrected in the act of reading scriptures, but is encouraged to engage in the passion; *Dives and Pauper* never raises the possibility that the passion could be misread: Dives never offers a "bad" reading that needs to be corrected'. In doing so, *Dives and Pauper* remains outside the debates about whether 'lewd' readers can master the codes of signification and, Schirmer maintains, reminds readers that the religious education of the laity is multivocal and thus often subject to only partial success.

That the wealthy, educated listener of *Dives and Pauper* is encouraged to participate in passion meditation is reflective of new anxieties about lay reading in early fifteenth-century religious culture. Some of the most well-known and widely circulated texts during these years were English translations of the Gospel, in particular, the *Prickynge of Love*, a translation of the *Stimulus amoris*, and Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, a free translation of the Franciscan *Meditationes vitae Christi* that is mentioned in several essays in this volume. Circulating alongside Walter Hilton's *Epistle on the Mixed Life* and appealing to the same audience, these meditations were designed for the growing number of lay readers who sought devotional practices that could be

underscore its productive potential for vernacular theology and literacy. Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*; Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience*; Somerset and Watson, eds, *The Vulgar Tongue*; Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*; Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*; Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals and Dissent*; and Watson, 'Conceptions of the Word'.

²⁹ Barnum, 'Introduction', *Dives and Pauper*, p. ix.

integrated into their daily lives.³⁰ The developing piety of the laity through the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century was spurred by new ideas of university scholars, continental reform movements, and increasing displays of devotion in court and the towns. Despite ecclesiastical fears of heresy, lay piety thrived in this environment. The essays in this section thus reveal an important assumption that threads throughout them: that even as devotional readers and reading expanded beyond orthodox, clerical milieux to include vernacular or heterodox approaches, they retained this fundamental link to Latinity.

The Practice of Reading

The second section of the volume examines how the link to Latinity assumed its shape in monastic contexts through liturgical and scriptural reading in particular, as these ways of reading were repurposed for various circumstances. Liturgical reading was, of course, fundamental to monastic practice and devotional literacy. The psalms were the backbone of the Divine Office, and knowledge of the psalter was the basic measure of literacy from the time of the Carolingians, ‘the child’s copy-book’ and ‘elementary reader’.³¹ But from at least the thirteenth century, and perhaps even earlier, the psalter circulated beyond the walls of the monastery, appended with the Little Office of the Virgin and other semi-liturgical works to form a basis for devotional reading. By the fifteenth century, books of hours structured around the Little Office expanded to include other prayers and extracts from the Gospels, short hours in honour of the Cross and of the Holy Spirit, as well as calendars of feast and saints’ days throughout the year.³² It is important to remember, however, that the liturgical reading of the Little Office, like many later models of devotional reading, was not a lay innovation; rather, it originated in the monastic semi-liturgical devotions adopted for use between the ninth and eleventh centuries. In this way, when extra-monastic devotees such as nuns, noblewomen, and elite laity read miracle stories and saints’ lives, they could do so in harmony with the liturgical

³⁰ Catto, ‘Shaping the Mixed Life’; Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation and Cognition*. Karnes argues that the *Mirror* and the *Prickynge* ‘recalibrated [Gospel meditations] in order to meet the needs of a wider, less learned audience’, p. 207.

³¹ Parkes, ‘Reading, Copying and Interpreting a Text’, p. 91. On the significance of liturgical reading, see also Saenger, ‘Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages’.

³² See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*. The phrase ‘raw material’ is from Gillespie, “‘Lukyng in Holy Bokes’”, p. 8.

rhythm of the larger church community. The essays in this section reflect the growing importance of communal identity in the practice of reading.

Alongside liturgical reading, the monastic model of *lectio divina* became one of the most widespread models of devotional reading in late medieval England. As with liturgical reading, the practice of *lectio divina* allowed readers to participate in the community of the church, and it could be applied and defined variably. As it was first formally described by the Carthusian Guigo II in his *Scala claustralium*, the process of divine reading involved four stages: careful study of the scriptures through reading (*lectio*); the meditation of the mind to seek knowledge of the truth ‘with the help of one’s own reason’ (*meditatio*); the turning of one’s heart to God in prayer (*oratio*); and the lifting of the mind towards God to taste the joys of ‘everlasting sweetness’ (*contemplatio*).³³ The knowledge of scripture necessary for this meditative process posed a problem, however, for those who were less familiar with Latin letters — a fact evidenced in early works like Anselm of Canterbury’s *Prayers and Meditations*, which had been copied for a well-born laywoman and prefaced with explicit instructions for how to practise meditation without an extensive familiarity with Latin letters.³⁴ And as much as writers downplayed the full extent of *lectio divina*, scriptural reading, or contemplation in devotional reading, they also understood the creative potential that this model held for making devotional reading available to those less learned. The essays in this section reveal that as *lectio divina* moved beyond the walls of the monastery to include women religious, and later, broader lay audiences, other strategies appeared for adopting this mode of reading to the laity.³⁵

In examining specific developments in monastic reading, all three of the essays in this section consider how community plays an important role in various redefinitions of monastic reading. Karmen Lenz provides a glimpse of this early development in her essay on the monastic revision of the Office

³³ Guigo II, *The Ladder of Monks*, p. 82. On the historical and intellectual context of Guigo’s formulation, see Studzinski, *Reading to Live*, pp. 140–76. For its significance, see Gillespie, “‘Lukyng in Holy Bokes’”, and the essay in this volume by Gris .

³⁴ The *Prayers and Meditations* were copied for the Countess Matilda of Tuscany and prefaced with a set of instructions that emphasize an affective rather than intellectual engagement with the scriptures. On the details of Anselm’s approach to *lectio divina* specifically, see Fulton, ‘Praying with Anselm at Admont’. On its later significance, see the essays in this volume by Uselmann and Morley.

³⁵ Consider for example the *Ancrene Wisse*. See Millett, ‘*Ancrene Wisse* and the Book of Hours’, and Uselmann, ‘Women Reading and Reading Women’.

of St Cuthbert. While it was initially written to unify northern and southern England in the tenth century, the Office was revised into a monastic context in the eleventh century. This monastic revision differs from its cathedral counterpart in the way it draws on and broadens the role of meditative reading as an interdisciplinary practice, not only evoking Cuthbert as an earthly example of Christ but also highlighting the role of the Virgin Mary. The emphasis on the Virgin became a key feature of liturgical reading as models of prayer spread beyond the monastery.

Perhaps no monastic community was more important in the dissemination of devotional works than the network formed between the Bridgettines of Syon Abbey and the Carthusians at Sheen. From its foundation in 1415 by Henry IV, the double monastery at Syon — which is mentioned in over half of the essays in this volume — had been closely aligned with royal power, orthodoxy, and the social elite, cultivating ties between the nuns and broader lay society.³⁶ In close cooperation with its twin house across the Thames, Syon served as a catalyst for producing and disseminating many works of spiritual guidance. Although the textual culture of the abbey changed over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it placed a high value on devotional literacy from the start. Early works associated with the abbey include a service book, *The Myroure of Oure Ladye* (c. 1430), and a meditation on Christ's life, the *Speculum devotorum* (*The Mirror to Devout Men and Women*, c. 1420), which was probably produced for one of the sisters by a brother at Sheen. The abbey was furthermore associated with many visionary and contemplative materials, producing a copy of Rolle's *Melos amoris*, Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* (including copies that had been sponsored by Margaret Beaufort), and translations such as *The Book of Ghostly Grace*, as well as Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. Many of these works found their way to readers outside the monastery.³⁷

³⁶ As Catto summarizes, 'Sheen and Syon provided spiritual refreshment to the Lancastrian political world, either through brethren hearing confessions or through the circulation of spiritual literature; many public figures were benefactors of Syon, including the dukes of Bedford and Gloucester, Margaret, Duchess of Clarence, Henry Chichele, Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, and numerous London merchants. The two houses from the literary point of view belonged to a European network of shared devotional texts, assembled from originals in various vernaculars, typically translated into Latin and sometimes translated into another vernacular [...]. In these establishments, the keepers of the conscience of Henry V and his colleagues, Gascoigne's more political graduate contemporaries could share equally with the high nobility and the captains of war the spiritual harvest of the Carthusians, just as they cooperated in the direction of public affairs': Catto, 'After Arundel', p. 49.

³⁷ Jones and Walsham, eds, *Syon Abbey and its Books*.

In this context, C. Annette Gris  looks at the coexistence of reading models at Syon in the writings by the brothers printed in the 1520s and 1530s, before the dissolution. Gris  points out (in an essay in a different volume) that the abbey's publication of *The Orcherd of Syon*, a Middle English translation of Catherine of Siena's *Il dialogo*, had marked a 'turning point' in its book production.³⁸ Soon after, in quick succession, many works were translated and produced by the brethren of Syon, including William Bond's *The Pilgrimage of Perfection* (1526, reprinted by Wynkyn de Worde in 1531); *The Mirror of Our Lady* (1530); John Fewterer's *Mirror of Christ's Passion* (1534). And Richard Whitford, who became one of the most prolific and outspoken translators at Syon, published fourteen books in seventeen years, including *Folowyng of Criste* (1531), a translation of Thomas   Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*. The range of Whitford's publications — from an English version of the Rule of St Augustine, the *Jesus Psalter*, *A Werke for Housholders* and *The Pype of Tonne of the Lyfe of Perfection*, among other works — is perhaps indicative of the breadth and reach of Syon's status during this period, as is the fact that Whitford continued to publish until 1541, even as the dissolution of the monasteries had already begun.

Gris 's essay in this volume reveals that many of the same concerns about religious reading, literacy, and authority that are discussed in the first section are still being discussed in the years leading up the Reformation. As the reformist movements of the fifteenth century met up with humanist and Lutheran ideas in 1530s religious culture, Syon texts revisited the monastic model of *lectio divina* to justify their representations of vernacular devotional reading. Adapting Latin monastic traditions to vernacular female religious and lay contexts was nothing new, just as criticism of monastic corruption had been ongoing since the fourteenth-century's Great Schism. The spectrum of literate practices developed in late medieval English devotional culture encouraged this kind of participation in wider debates about religious reading and readers.

This section concludes with an examination of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, a text that offers a measure of early fifteenth-century efforts to adapt Latin monastic traditions for vernacular readers. Produced in the wake of Arundel's Constitutions of 1409 and having received the official *imprimatur* of Arundel himself, the *Mirror* is extant in sixty manuscripts, fragments, and printed editions and in many ways stands at the crossroads of manuscript and print culture, heralding a new epoch in devotional reading.³⁹ Love

³⁸ Gris , "Moche profitable unto religious persone".

³⁹ Love's *Mirror* stands as one of the most widely circulated texts in late medieval England,

insists that he writes for an audience of ‘symple creatures the whiche as childryn hauen nede to be fedde with mylke of lyghte doctryne’, replacing higher levels of contemplation with official prayers of the church such as the Ave Maria and the Pater Noster. Yet his work appears to have circulated among a wide variety of readers — including wealthy elite, nuns, secular clergy, and parish priests — underscoring the disjunction between rhetorical and historical audiences that was a salient feature of manuscript culture. As Susan Uselmann points out in her essay, the *Mirror*’s wide appeal may stem in part from the way Love alters the practice of ‘discontinuous reading’, a form of devotion associated with sophisticated textual navigation among the religious and lay elite, into a liturgical approach based on ‘convenience’ or ‘fittingness’ of the reader’s choice. Although typically interpreted as a text that envisages its readers as ‘simple children’, the *Mirror*’s espousal of *convenientia* relies on a cognitive precision reminiscent of Anselm of Canterbury’s incarnational theology, and can be seen at work in communities such as Barking and Syon. Disrupting the accordance of reader and text that had long been a feature of selective, affective devotion, Love offers, as Uselmann describes in Chapter 6, ‘a model of private meditation that could circulate beyond the walls of the monastery without being maligned as heresy or misinterpreted as a form of readerly empowerment’ (p. 167).

Love’s carefully mediated model of reading was influential in the first half of the fifteenth century, setting up a tradition of instruction through vernacular religious reading that would gather momentum until the Reformation. Close attention to readers and reading practices became a hallmark of fifteenth-century treatises, as sketching out acceptable practices and modelling successful hermeneutics became frequent themes in religious literary culture. The *terminus ad quem* for Part II of this volume thus takes its cue from recent scholarship that locates a particular shift in intellectual and cultural attitudes towards book production and distribution, which are prefigured but not fully realized in Nicholas Love’s *Mirror*. The Constitutions are typically interpreted as a watershed moment in the history of devotional literature, because in prohibiting the translation of scripture into the vernacular, they produced an era of self-censorship that took hold ‘a few years later’, and also had the inadvertent effect of producing a canon of vernacular devotional texts that ‘remained staple reading until well into the sixteenth century’.⁴⁰ With Love’s *Mirror* the emphasis turns

and may have been designed in part to compete with the Wycliffite Bible. For its significance, see Sargent, ‘Introduction’.

⁴⁰ Watson, ‘Censorship and Cultural Change’, p. 835. While more recently scholars have suggested that this process occurred after Arundel’s death, under the program of Henry

from expressing independent forms of piety to performing received expressions of piety that have been mediated by the expert reader/translator/compiler. At the same time that devotional texts were casting their readers as exemplars of obedience, they were reimagined and reformed as various textual communities expanded their reach and influence on devotional culture. At the end of this period, readers, authors, and reading practices were in a state of constant flux, being defined and redefined for the changing circumstances in which they found themselves.

The examination of reading models in the section entitled ‘The Practice of Reading’ illustrates that as texts and practices circulated in and out of the monastery, so reading models moved and transformed to adapt to new circumstances and requirements. Thus audiences were exposed to multiple, adaptive reading models that required active engagement by the reader to make meaning in the text and strive to improve their spiritual living. The Cuthbert Office encouraged the religious who performed it to make intertextual associations and read the layers of meaning embedded in the liturgical text. Whitford’s texts call for a serious commitment to spiritual reading and offer a wealth of materials that could be employed in this ongoing project. In contrast, Love’s *Mirror* discourages its readers from seeking other authorities, requiring a discipline of simplicity and obedience in their stead. In all of these examples, the active reading processes not only make available new textual materials but also illustrate new ways of engaging with such materials.

Modelling Readers

The final section of the volume, excepting the afterword, is titled ‘Modelling Readers’ and considers the roles of authors and readers in late medieval vernacular religious culture. There was a long tradition of devotional texts written for religious women — the *cura monialium* — which provided an important model for reading that continued to appeal to readers throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴¹ Dating back at least to the thirteenth-century conciliar reforms, such as Lateran IV and Pecham’s syllabus, the textual convention of male authors writing for their spiritual charge(s) frames the instructional purpose of the text as pastoral, personal and profitable, so that readers

Chichele (cf. Gillespie, ‘Chichele’s Church’), the Constitutions remain a touchstone in scholarship on fifteenth-century devotional reading.

⁴¹ Gillespie, ‘Cura Pastoralis in Deserto’. See also the collection of essays edited by Gunn and Innes-Parker, *Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care*.

are primed to accept the textual advice in a posture of humility, obedience, and simple faith. The pastoral agenda ensured that these works were often written to accommodate rather than further their audiences' learning, and thus made them particularly applicable to broader audiences.⁴² This convention in spiritual writings of addressing a religious sister continued well through the Reformation, sometimes written for a community of religious women — from the small group of anchoresses addressed in the *Ancrene Wisse* to the nuns of Syon Abbey and of Bishop Richard Fox's diocese of Winchester, for example.⁴³ And many of the works that circulated most widely during this period, such as Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* and Richard Rolle's *Form of Living*, were originally written or adapted for an audience of women.

All three of the essays in this section examine gendered issues in the study of late medieval authors, translators, patrons, printers, and readers of devotional literature. Christina Carlson's essay 'Printing, Propaganda, and Profit: Richard Pynson and the Life of St Radegund' shows how Richard Pynson's edition of Bradshaw's *Life of Radegund* responds to the desire for vernacular works on lay piety — many of which were first written or translated for a female monastic audience and later adapted for a mixed audience — and reflects his professional relationship with the royal family in his modelling of Radegund (herself a princess) on aspects of Henry VII's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, and her daughters as exemplars of contemporary female piety. Stephanie Morley's chapter, "For the prouffyte of other": Lady Margaret Beaufort and the Female Reader as Translator in *The Mirrour of Golde to the Synfull Soule*, considers Lady Margaret Beaufort's translating activities, examining the ways in which these activities supported her 'pious public service' program, as well as in what manner her gendered imagery and female exemplarity could provide a means for a lay print audience to identify with her and her spiritual practices. Catherine Innes-Parker's essay 'Bodleian Library MS Holkham Miscellany 41 and the Modelling of Women's Devotion' focuses on a manuscript produced for female religious that has one text by a male author/translator and another by a female author/translator: the paper focuses on how female and male biblical models are used to shape the reader's spiritual formation.

⁴² Millett, 'Women in No Man's Land: English Recluses and the Development of Vernacular Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries'. On the metonymic relationship between women as 'carnal' readers and broader lay audiences, see Copeland, 'Why Women Can't Read: Medieval Hermeneutics, Statutory Law, and the Lollard Heresy', pp. 253–86.

⁴³ Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*.

While traditional gendered types are used throughout these late medieval texts — these are givens for the time period, of course — these essays illustrate quite complex attitudes to gender and gendered reading. Concurrently with the expected traditional and generic views, we see context-specific and nuanced perspectives that could produce innovative results. More specifically, these writings offer a sophisticated nuancing of the male author/female reader model that forms the archetypal medieval framework. Moving away from a simplistic one-way hierarchy, the texts show relationships among writers, translators, scribes, readers, and patrons evincing a remarkable level of negotiation, collaboration, and variation. The important body of criticism that stems from the networks of female readers, patrons, and communities is the necessary foundation for the papers included here (as Morley notes in her opening paragraphs).⁴⁴ What makes the essays here unique is that they describe women contributing to devotional literary activities in roles other than reader and patron and — significantly — taking on the roles of writers and translators: although rare in the English milieu, this is an important theme in both Innes-Parker's and Morley's essays. In addition, Carlson and Morley illustrate representations and examples of women who are active participants in political and social arenas: while Lady Margaret Beaufort is the best historical example, Carlson also discusses the representation of women in royal weddings. These women are not silent and obedient, but contribute actively to and work collaboratively on their devotional activities, in tandem with male translators and printers; this illustrates a complex understanding of the cooperative relationships with their female readers and patrons.

The literary impact of Margaret Beaufort, whose involvement in pre-Reformation print culture began in the 1490s and continued until her death in 1509, has been much discussed by scholars,⁴⁵ and this volume offers an important discussion of her collaboration with Richard Pynson, in particular in Carlson's and Morley's chapters. Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* was translated

⁴⁴ Important work on this topic includes Meale, "... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englissh, and frensch"; Riddy, 'Women Talking about the Things of God'; and *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. by Barratt. See more recently Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*; Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience*; Krug, *Reading Families*; and Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*.

⁴⁵ Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*; Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Books'; see also Axon, 'The Lady Margaret as a Lover of Literature'. For a discussion of her role in print culture, see Edwards and Meale, 'The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England'. See also the relevant sections of Hellinga, *William Caxton and Early Printing in England*; and Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*.

and circulated in the fifteenth century, but was not well known until Pynson printed Books I to III in 1503, then in 1504 reissued an edition with Margaret's translation of Book IV from the French. After this point, the work became immensely popular, and along with Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* and Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* was essentially canonized by Thomas More as a work appropriate for the 'people unlearned'.⁴⁶ Pynson had printed Lydgate's *Mirror for Princes* among other Lydgatean works, and like his contemporary, Wynkyn de Worde, was deeply aware of the role of the nobility who underwrote and supported this market. Indeed, this awareness seems to have become even more acute after the 1509 accession of Henry VIII when, as Alexandra Gillespie has shown, the two printers invoked their royal connections more regularly and used them to 'redefine the labour of printing'.⁴⁷

Christina Carlson extends this awareness even to Richard Pynson's unusual choice to print the *Life of St Radegund* which, Carlson argues, may have been motivated not by a specific patron but by the convergence of 'general cultural and economic considerations' that came to influence the dissemination of devotional texts in the sixteenth century. A brief vernacular life of the sixth-century Frankish queen, the *Life of St Radegund* was written by an anonymous monk, most likely Harry Bradshaw (d. 1513), and is typically associated with the founding of Jesus College, Cambridge in 1496, when the priory of St Radegund's was dissolved. But the audience for Pynson's printed edition, Carlson argues, seems to have little to do with the original context, and the more convincing reasons for its production postdate Bradshaw's life: specifically, Pynson's own collaborations with influential figures such as Bishop Richard Fox (d. 1528) and Margaret Beaufort, who herself was likely behind Pynson's 1506 appointment as Printer to the King. Margaret had a well-documented hand in the founding of Jesus College, and internal evidence from the text of the *Life* reveals a keen appreciation for the notion that marriage could serve to create social order and the 'aesthetic of spectacle' that characterized Henry VII's time. Indeed, Henry VII was 'the first monarch to make regular use of printed propaganda',⁴⁸ so that Carlson's consideration of this cross-section of

⁴⁶ Lovatt, 'The "Imitation of Christ"', p. 114.

⁴⁷ Each printer describes himself as 'Printer to the King', or printer to Lady Margaret Beaufort, respectively; see Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*, p. 165. The seminal work on the influence of the printing press is Eisenstein, *Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; See also Elton, *The Body of the Whole Realm*; and Baskerville, *A Chronological Bibliography of Propaganda and Polemic*.

⁴⁸ Neville-Sington, 'Press, Politics and Religion', p. 577.

commercial influences sheds significant light on the way that Pynson and other printers traded on the popularity of devotional texts to advance a 'shrewd and profitable business venture'.

Stephanie Morley's essay offers a suggestive reminder of the many vibrant communities of readers in the early fifteenth century — particularly those comprised of laywomen and their female religious counterparts — who both reflected and helped create a devotional culture that valued reading and book ownership. 'Common profit books' circulated among personal, familial networks, as well as among the social and religious elite. Women like Margaret Beaufort envisioned the promotion of morally edifying works as a devotional act in itself and, as Rebecca Krug points out, 'helped to create a sense that women's participation in literary pursuits was a socially prestigious act of public service'.⁴⁹

Stephanie Morley's essay suggests that these acts of public service, particularly when promulgated by figures like Margaret Beaufort, not only expressed one's piety and social capital; they could also actually change conventional assumptions about male authors and female readers. Although *The Mirrour of Golde to the Synfull Soule*, translated by Lady Margaret Beaufort and printed by Richard Pynson around 1506, is much less known than Margaret's famed translation of Book IV of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, it nevertheless espouses a remarkable approach to meditation that suggests Margaret was invested in a broader program of literacy. Instead of drawing on traditional visualization techniques such as those espoused by Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, *The Mirrour of Golde* asserts scholastic approaches that require careful attention to the textual structure of the work and its relationship to other texts. Because this work 'asks its readers to scrutinize their reading habits', Morley argues, Margaret's choice to translate and disseminate *The Mirrour of Golde* 'demonstrate[s] that women readers could inhabit varied and more active reading positions while still supporting the institutional structures in which they were embedded'.

Morley's essay underscores the significance of the communities of women readers that emerged and gained momentum over the course of the fifteenth century as women's reading became part of a broader 'programme of virtuous activities designed to occupy body and mind' among those who 'claim or aspire

⁴⁹ Krug, *Reading Families*, p. 83, p. 103. The scholarship on women's reading communities encompasses a diverse and dynamic range of studies, but some indispensable studies include Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*; Meale, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, in particular the essays by Riddy and Boffey; Bell, 'Medieval Women Book Owners'; McCash, ed., *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*; Warren, *The Embodied Word*; Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*; Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Books'.

to “gentility”.⁵⁰ This culture of reading was fuelled by the growing number of textual communities that provided access to books — royal patrons, religious houses and communities associated with translators and spiritual advisors, as well as early printers like Caxton, de Worde and Pynson. The introduction of the printing press as a tool for propaganda has often been referred to as the linchpin of the Reformation, but it is important to recall that the informal and formal networks of women readers, some of whom were powerful members of the social elite, remained prominent forces behind the success of commercial and political ventures.

In many ways, spiritual miscellanies, excerpts, and compilations of earlier works were the mainstay of devotion during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, providing a kind of all-in-one library to those who did not have the means to own many books.⁵¹ But the reception of this spiritual inheritance was not a passive activity. Indeed, by all accounts, the later ‘readers’ of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century vernacular devotional works were not simply slavish copiers, but were in fact well acquainted with earlier English writers. Many compilations appear to be ‘woven together, sentence by sentence, out of borrowings’ from native works such as the *Scale of Perfection*, the *Form of Living*, and the *Cloud of Unknowing* which suggest a deep familiarity with this tradition.⁵² Works during this period could also be excerpted to serve a dramatically new purpose. Wynkyn de Worde’s radical reworking of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, published in 1501 as *A shorte treatyse of contemplacyon taught by our lord Iehesu Cryste, or taken out of the boke of Margerie Kempe of Lynne*, was initially presented as a kind of prayer book in the tradition of the *Fifteen Oes*; but when the work was reprinted by Pepwell in 1521 it became part of England’s anti-Lutheran campaign.⁵³ In this way, fifteenth-century readers were careful but assertive when they adapted and renewed the fourteenth-century spiritual inheritance for a new generation and context.

The complex relationship between author, reader, and inherited tradition is wonderfully illustrated by Bodleian Library, MS Holkham Miscellany 41. As Catherine Innes-Parker argues, this miscellany, written and/or commissioned

⁵⁰ Meale and Boffey, ‘Gentlewomen’s Reading’, p. 526.

⁵¹ On the significance of the compilation, see Lerer, ‘Medieval English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology’; Nichols and Wenzel, eds, *The Whole Book*; Boffey and Thompson, ‘Anthologies and Miscellanies’; Minnis, ‘Late-Medieval Discussions of Compilatio’ and Minnis, ‘*Nolens auctor sed compilator reputari*’.

⁵² Windeatt, ‘1412–1534: Texts’, p. 206.

⁵³ Summit, *Lost Property*, pp. 126–37.

by a wealthy woman, reveals a keen sense of the way ‘male-centered texts [...] might have been read by the women to whom they were addressed’. The manuscript contains a unique copy of *The festis and the passion of oure lord Ihesu Crist*, a meditative prayer cycle written by an anonymous woman; a brief lyric, *Syke and sorowe deeply*; and a Middle English recension of William Flete’s *De remediis contra temptationes* entitled *Consolacio anime*. Although it is superficially addressed to women, the *Consolacio* remains deeply influenced by the male-authored pastoral textual tradition in which ‘the male world is universal’ and women are associated with sin. The *Festis*, however, makes use of positive female role models, drawing from the Bible and remaking even the most problematic figures — Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman — in a positive light. In this way, ‘positive models of the soul are female, and male models are either negative or model the Church as a whole’. But it is ultimately the structure of the miscellany itself, Innes-Parker argues, which has the most significant impact on the reading process. Carefully structured as a cycle of prayer, meditation, consolation and devotion, the miscellany encourages a new *use* for the male-authored pastoral tradition, in which ‘negative female models are products of despair’ and positive images of women become a model of the strength that is derived from the reader become Christ’s spouse.

Carlson’s and Morley’s essays remind us that women played multiple roles in late medieval textual cultures as readers, subjects, patrons, and translators. Innes-Parker’s essay takes this notion further in her study of the multiple roles of male and female authors and scribes whose texts were developed and adapted to sit side-by-side in the Holkham manuscript. In concluding this section with Innes-Parker’s examination of MS Holkham Misc. 41, the editors seek to provide a sampling of the material that appealed to the growing ranks of devout religious and lay readers, particularly women, who sought to individualize their devotional practice. Mary Erler has pointed out that book gifts to religious houses nearly doubled from 1349 to 1501, and that by mid-century the ‘kind of reading alters [...] from liturgical to devotional’.⁵⁴ Perhaps the most dramatic example of this shift is demonstrated by the widespread popularity of visionary and meditative literature, single texts or prayer cycles, on the lives of holy men and women. For women in particular, hagiographic narratives suggested a new kind of textual community, in which the ‘reader’s response was, or should be, informed by her sex’.⁵⁵ Original compositions appeared, such as Margery

⁵⁴ Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p. 42.

⁵⁵ Sanok, *Her Life Historical*, p. 48. See also Pickering, ‘Saints’ Lives’.

Kempe's *Book of Margery Kempe*, Osbern Bokenham's *Legend of Holy Women*, and Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, as did translations of continental works, including St Birgitta's *Liber celestis*, Catherine of Siena's *Dialogo*, Mechtild of Hackeborn's *Book of Ghostly Grace*, Elizabeth of Hungary's *Revelations*, and Henry Suso's *Treatise of the Seven Poyntes of Trewe Wisdom*. These works embraced conventional assumptions about gender and illiteracy (such as the notion that images could function as 'books' of the unlettered) while reimagining the role of the reader. Works associated with the early years of Syon Abbey, for example, such as *The Myroure of Oure Lady* and Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, underscored an Augustinian definition of 'reading' as an activity that involved visual perception and reflection.⁵⁶ Alongside Hilton's works such as the *Scale of Perfection* and the works of Richard Rolle, devotional works that continued to be popular into the sixteenth century — such as *The Chastising of God's Children*, the *Vitas Patrum*, *Prick of Conscience*, and Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ* — are indicative of the growing interest in 'common profit' works. As Mary Erler points out, and as MS Holkham Misc. 41 reveals, the level of book ownership and circulation among laypeople 'signals membership in a common religious culture, an affirmation which is sometimes more powerful than individual interests'. These works espoused models of devotion that remained suitable even as the works passed from owner to owner.⁵⁷

Together, these chapters show us the variety of ways in which women participated in vernacular devotional culture, as producers and consumers and sometimes both. We see in these examples that women's participation was valuable, indeed critical, to the development of this culture. Devotional texts produced for a generalized female audience, and the generic feminine reading models found in them, had a powerful influence on the reading practices of the period, yet this section of the volume reveals that the limitations placed on female readers in generic devotional models were more theoretical than practical.

The afterword offers not only a volume synthesis, but also a summative example that shows how the various arguments of this volume's essays help to illuminate other texts from the medieval period. To begin, the afterword demonstrates how this collection of essays has helped to refine our understanding of medieval readers and reading practices through its interdisciplinary, multi-genre, trans-historical study. It discusses how our volume's particular attention to lay and vernacular readers helps to locate their tastes and practices

⁵⁶ Krug, *Reading Families*; Bryan, *Looking Inward*; Stock, *After Augustine*.

⁵⁷ Erler, 'Devotional Literature', p. 495; Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p. 135.

within a larger narrative of Western medieval reading that includes monastic and Latin practices as well, showing their essential relationships and the flow of ideas between and among textual communities. It also traces key stakes of the networks of writers, patrons, and publishers, all of whom themselves are readers, allied to serve and benefit from a wider audience beyond themselves; these stakes include the obvious devotional ends of the texts discussed here, but also the more implicit gender, social, and economic factors that figure into each new written project. The afterword then moves on to focus on a miracle story from the end of our period, 'A Devout Medytacyon in Sayenge Devoutly the Psalter of our Lady', and offers a reading of the text that reveals how this volume's texts and arguments offer productive ways to analyse and understand other literary works. This analysis pays particular attention to two threads: one explores the text's negotiations between Latinity and vernacularity, while the other concerns real and symbolic readers, whether religious or lay, and the textual communities that they constitute. The afterword concludes by highlighting the 'generative and transformative capabilities of the vernacular devotional traditions that we have studied in this volume' and pointing to some areas of future scholarship that could build on the work included here.

* * *

To write a history of devotional reading is an inherently paradoxical task, and in structuring this volume of essays thematically it has been the editors' intent to explore creative connections among the various ways that readers were conceived and received in late medieval England. Although traces of medieval textual communities and their readers may be gleaned from the interstices of social, political, and religious history, as well as from commercial, material, and manuscript witnesses, nevertheless these traces also serve as an insistent reminder of the elusive nature of the act of reading itself. Perhaps no one tried more fervently to mitigate this elusiveness than medieval devotional writers, who saw the efficacy of their task as vital to their own salvation, and yet whose audiences' literacy levels required continuous negotiation. These audiences envisioned devotional reading somewhere between 'reading aloud and silent reading, between reading in public and reading in solitude, or between educated and "popular" reading'.⁵⁸ And by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, even religious communities had shifted from 'the more common, older form

⁵⁸ These are the 'macroscopic oppositions' that Chartier avers are embedded in any history of reading. Chartier, 'Frenchness in the History of the Book', pp. 299–329.

of reading — that is, by listening — to the newer form of reading by looking.’⁵⁹ To write a history of the horizon between vocalized and written texts, between listening and looking, is thus to reach into the deepest corners of the mind, where devotional writers sought to shape the sacred space of the unconscious.

It has long been recognized that scholarship on readers and reading must thus be multivocal. A. I. Doyle pointed out early on in the development of this field that ‘it is impossible to pursue manuscript studies nowadays satisfactorily in individual isolation, for one cannot find all one ought to know by oneself and one ought not to keep all one knows to oneself; the jigsaw puzzle we are all working on is so big that it may need the help of every eye to fit a piece in it.’⁶⁰ The present book consists of nine individual pieces of a different ‘puzzle’ as we have sought to highlight the relationship between micro and macro approaches to readers and reading. From the contours of these individualized approaches emerges a cluster of larger, longer narratives of the history of literacy, libraries, and education, as well as book production, printing, and publishing that are already well known among scholars of devotional literacy. The individual essays here highlight the vital role of multidisciplinary approaches in considering readers and the history of reading, providing a glimpse of the range of works that might be considered ‘devotional literature’, as well as the physical appearance and structure of books themselves, including their layout and structure. Finally, this volume also engages in the ongoing effort to unite reader-response theory with specific studies of historical audiences. To return to an image from earlier in this introduction, a history of reading is more like a kaleidoscope than a narrative, relying on a host of methodologies, disciplines, and perspectives to depict its variegated colours. This volume showcases the ways in which a history of reading is inevitably comprised of individual subprojects that examine different texts from a range of historical periods, and it is only by juxtaposing these various lenses that the history of reading can be understood as a broader narrative. By bringing together nine independent essays on medieval devotional readers and reading culture, this volume of *Disputatio* reveals that the construction of devotional readers and reading involves a tapestry of social and religious histories, intellectual and political climates, as well as material and psychological approaches which, while deeply individualized and often idiosyncratic, may nevertheless be conceived as part of a broader history that remains as individualized and elusive as readers themselves.

⁵⁹ Erler, ‘Private Reading’, p. 134. The classic study of the shift to private reading is Saenger, ‘Books of Hours’.

⁶⁰ Doyle, ‘Retrospect and Prospect’, pp. 145–46.

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‘PE LETTERE SLEEP’: LOLLARDS, LITERALISM, AND THE DEFINITION OF BAD READERS

Anna Lewis

The Lollard movement is being constantly defined and re-defined, and the population for which the term is a referent likewise varies. Anne Hudson’s work of the last three decades has used the evidence of texts written by Lollards themselves to draw a detailed picture of a far more widespread, influential, and even unified movement than had previously been recognized.¹ However, Steven Justice and Fiona Somerset (among others) have suggested that this depiction may be simplistic because it takes too little account of the fact that individual Lollards ‘thought for themselves’ (as opposed to following some clear ‘formula’ of belief) and that their ‘beliefs were no more the pure product of their clergy’s instruction than the beliefs of any believers have ever been.’² This essay works on the assumption that there were significant numbers of men and women who aligned themselves very consciously with a core set of beliefs which can be defined as Wycliffite (something very close to the ‘statement of faith’ set out in the ‘Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards’, for example), and for whom Bible reading and preaching was a key practice. That these men and women considered themselves to be part of a community is apparent from texts that are directed at the comfort or instruction of the group, evidence of

¹ See, for summary, Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*.

² Justice, ‘Inquisition, Speech, and Writing’, pp. 311, 313.

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possible communal ownership of books, and the existence of Lollard schools or conventicles. A communal identity is also suggested by vocabulary and rhetoric that was clearly shared by a significant subset of the larger Lollard and Wycliffite movement(s).³ This essay examines one aspect of this rhetoric, namely the relationship between letter and spirit and how this is imagined, and describes how it was used to define Lollard theological and intellectual projects in contradistinction to their opponents. As the act of reading is so much at the heart of these projects, this essay demonstrates how a correct (as far as the Lollards were concerned) understanding of the relationship between letter and spirit became a yardstick for measuring the effectiveness and fruitfulness of readers.

Studies of late medieval religious culture in England testify to the dominance of what Gail McMurray Gibson calls an 'incarnational aesthetic' that transformed the 'abstract and theological' into the 'personal and concrete'.⁴ This aesthetic is manifested in painting and sculpture, in the popularity of affective meditation — promoting visualization of the bodily and earthly events in the life of Christ — and in the 'frankly literal and physical' language of the Mass.⁵ This dominant model of devotion was challenged by Lollards who sought to reform a church they regarded as dangerously distracted by physical and material trappings, and neglectful of the spiritual Christ in its midst (dwelling among the poor and within his servants). Men, Lollards argued, must be 'more gostly' and 'take lesse hede to [...] sensible signes, [...] newe peyntingis schewid by menis craft', and 'bodies of seyntis'.⁶ In Lollard writings, attention to the physical and bodily is repeatedly seen as something that obscures spiritual realities and acts as an obstacle to attaining them; according to one Lollard sermon writer, Christ's ascension from earth to heaven indicates that Christians must be 'purged' of their 'too worldly' love for Christ in the flesh in order that they might concentrate 'clenely on heavenly thingus'.⁷ In the polemic of the Lollards, emphasis is placed less on the contemporary obsession with the physical and the bodily, and more on the need to discover the 'gostly'.

The goal of returning to an ideal, original, and more spiritual condition was at the centre of key points of Lollard doctrine, including the need to

³ See Hudson, 'A Lollard Sect Vocabulary?' and Matti Peikola, *Congregation of the Elect*.

⁴ Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion*, pp. 7–8. For other studies on the culture of the age, see Aers and Staley, *Powers of the Holy*; Beckwith, *Christ's Body*; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*; Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*.

⁵ Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 288.

⁶ *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Hudson, p. 84.

⁷ *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson and Gradon, I, 451–52.

regain the purity of the early church, the high value placed on an unadulterated Bible, and the suspicion of physical aids to worship. Through the recovery of things distorted and covered over, Lollards sought to reclaim a spiritual state once held by the earliest Christians but now lost. Lollard writings frequently employ the language of stripping, revealing, exposing, 'making bare', and rendering naked — language which, as Sheila Delany has pointed out, denotes returning to the 'natural condition: the pristine condition [... the] originary'.⁸ As many Lollards saw it, the church had to be returned to the 'perfection of the first begynninge' (the original and pristine model of apostolic poverty and purity represented by the first-century church),⁹ simple transactions between men and God (prayer, intercession, worship, sacraments) had to be stripped of the (largely physical) accoutrements which covered them, and, most importantly, scripture needed to be translated into English and freed from the corrupt modern glosses which, in too many cases, had become as sacrosanct as the Word itself.¹⁰ In Lollard texts 'nakedness' has positive associations because it infers a move away from the physical nature of 'covers' ('sensible signs' or 'bodies' and glosses) and towards the spiritual or 'ghostly' (and therefore superior) nature of the thing they cover: the Word, truth, God himself. The 'covers', identified with the physical and the fleshly, are rejected; they are blamed for distorting the truth and for confusing and deceiving Christians, and they are identified as tools of the enemies of the Gospel.

For those who opposed this Lollard point of view, nakedness seemed a far from desirable condition; as Delany points out, 'naked' and its derivatives carried various (sometimes contradictory) connotations for a medieval audience.¹¹ For opponents of Lollardy, the Lollard call for 'nakedness' contained the threat of 'impoverishment', of things 'stripped of what had properly covered or adorned' them.¹² After all, as Bernard of Clairvaux had written, the incarna-

⁸ Delany, *The Naked Text*, p. 118.

⁹ *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, p. 29.

¹⁰ Lollards were of course not alone in advocating for many of these changes; as Mary Dove discusses in her *Earliest Advocates of the English Bible*, others who did not identify as Wycliffite or Lollard also engaged with similar issues. For example, Dove writes about Archbishop Arundel's own complex opinions on this subject, suggesting that, in his concern that any Bible translation must be the work of 'men of impeccable orthodoxy', Arundel may, 'had he lived longer', have considered initiating the project himself (p. xx). I focus primarily on the Lollard perspective on translation and glosses because I am tracing a strongly Lollard letter/spirit rhetoric in this article.

¹¹ Delany, *The Naked Text*, p. 118.

¹² Delany, *The Naked Text*, p. 118.

tion itself — the hiding of God's divinity in the covering of humanity — was a sign that God recognizes the human inability to 'love otherwise than carnally', or to 'not thenke bot [of] bodyes or bodily thinges', as Nicholas Love paraphrases in his Prologue to the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*.¹³ The use of images, another way in which spiritual abstractions are represented and adorned as physical figures, could therefore be defended on the basis that they not only educated the faithful but also engaged their emotions, 'ferther encrecing [...] devocioun and good affeccoun to be gendrid upon Crist', as Reginald Pecock put it.¹⁴ Likewise, transubstantiation and the ritual of the Mass were closely tied to emotional engagement with the suffering and death of Christ, and its defenders argued that Wycliffite teaching perversely inverted the truth (saying that the Eucharist is bread naturally and Christ's body figuratively), and misread the words of Christ and the church fathers. On the subject of Bible translation and glossing, two more practices that were drawn into this debate, opponents argued that the vernacular was not a vehicle capable of expressing the spiritual sense of scripture.¹⁵ Furthermore, the Lollard call to strip the text of its glosses would, they argued, effectively reduce it to its literal and most base sense, thereby drastically increasing the risk of misinterpretation and even heresy.¹⁶ As Mary Dove points out, many of the arguments against Bible translation were grounded in a traditional 'model of pedagogy' which placed a 'symbolic boundary' between 'simple people' who understand scripture at a literal level and the clergy or *litterati* 'for whom the [...] spiritual senses of scripture are reserved'.¹⁷ Just as much as the Lollards, then, opponents of Bible translation saw themselves as defending the 'gostly' nature of the text and the act of reading from enemies grounded in fleshly ways of thinking. This is apparent in the way that Augustinian canon Henry Knighton had no problem identifying lay read-

¹³ Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion*, p. 14. Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. by Sargent, p. 10.

¹⁴ Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, p. 269.

¹⁵ The Dominican Thomas Palmer who participated in Oxford debates about vernacular translation in the early part of the fifteenth century described English as a deficient language, incapable of conveying scriptural truth. For centuries, catechetical prayers such as the Pater Noster were taught to laity almost exclusively in Latin because the power and meaning of the prayers were thought diminished by translation; for further examples, see essays by Vulić and Uselmann in this volume.

¹⁶ Both the Oxford Carmelite John Kynyngham and Thomas Palmer made the point that many heresies had arisen from access to the uninterpreted or naked text which is read in a 'strictly grammatical sense' (Dove, 'Wyclif and the English Bible', pp. 376–77, p. 380).

¹⁷ Dove, 'Wyclif and the English Bible', p. 380.

ers with the physicality represented by animals when he compared the opening up of the Bible through translation into English to the casting of pearls before swine.¹⁸ Defenders of the status quo identified the urge to 'nakedness' not with the move towards a more spiritual understanding but towards a more fleshly or literal one.

Those aligning with these opposing views, therefore, each characterize their enemies (whether defined as 'heretics', 'antecrist's disciples', or 'proude scholars') as 'fleshly' or 'bodily'. This is not surprising given that the opposition, and potential for constant conflict between, the flesh and the spirit was intrinsic to the medieval Christian's understanding of his life (though, as Sarah Beckwith's work has shown, this binary is nowhere so simple as its common usage in this context would make it seem¹⁹). There is a specifically hermeneutic edge to the conflict between flesh and spirit because of the way their opposition was worked out in the reading of biblical text. Scripture was compared to the incarnate word — Christ himself. On earth, Christ's divinity had been covered with a 'veil of flesh' and now scripture imitates Christ by having a 'body', which is the 'words of the sacred text', and a soul which is the 'spiritual sense'; the written word is therefore 'almost interchangeable' with 'body'.²⁰ The idea that scripture has both a literal meaning and a spiritual sense was a foundation for medieval exegesis and a principle that had directed biblical exposition from the time of the earliest church fathers. If, as according to St Paul's dictum, the 'letter kills' but the 'spirit gives life', discovering the 'spiritual meaning' of a passage (essentially by reading allegorically) became a vital necessity and much effort was expended to this end.²¹ According to Augustine, 'when that which is said figuratively is taken as though it were literal, it is understood carnally' and nothing causes the 'death of the soul' more certainly than subjecting the understanding

¹⁸ Knighton is commenting on the existence of an English Bible translation by 'Master John Wyclif' and states that its existence means 'the content of scripture has become more common and more open to laymen and women [...] than it customarily is to quite learned clerks [...] and thus the pearl of the gospel is scattered abroad and trodden underfoot by swine' (quoted in Dove, 'Wyclif and the English Bible', p. 378).

¹⁹ See Beckwith, *Christ's Body*.

²⁰ Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, p. 1.

²¹ Paul's own model in Galatians 4 led to the eventually commonplace practice of the Old Testament being read typologically as a foreshadowing of the New; furthermore, the fact that Christ had removed the 'veil' (*velamen*) from the letter (II Corinthians 3. 16) encouraged the idea that there could be layers of meaning to the words and events of the New Testament, meanings which applied to the church (the 'allegorical' sense), the individual (the 'moral' sense), and the afterlife (the 'anagogical' sense). See Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer*, p. 292.

‘to the flesh in the pursuit of the letter’.²² To read only what a text ‘actually says’ rather than its *sentence* or meaning was viewed as a form of illiteracy.²³

Just as the spirit–flesh dichotomy was used in a variety of religious writings to differentiate good Christian practices from bad ones, so, in the debate about the reading of scripture and vernacular translation, the spirit–letter dichotomy could be used in order to differentiate productive readers (those in whom the word of God would bear fruit) from unproductive ones. Lollardy’s call for the translation of scripture and its antipathy towards some forms of glosses opened Lollards up to the accusation that they were guilty of holding tenaciously to the letter while being blind to the sense. This essay considers examples of how Lollards countered this attack by effectively reclaiming some of the key concepts of exegesis and by consistently asserting a strong and identifiably Lollard conception of reading and of the ‘right’, effective, and theologically justified reader. Lollards turned the tables and accused their enemies of relying on flawed hermeneutic practices which led them, *not* Lollards, into that failure to discern spiritual meaning which is the hallmark of bad reading. As the root of Lollard attitudes to scripture is found in Wyclif’s understanding of the literal sense, it is worth starting with an overview of his position.

The Significance of the Bible’s Literal Sense

The traditional four-fold sense of scripture, the basis of biblical exegesis, distinguished the letter from the three spiritual senses: the allegorical, the tropological, and the anagogical.²⁴ The superiority granted to the spiritual sense had led to varying degrees of neglect of the literal sense among church leaders and scholars. The literal text had been considered only as something that needed to be looked through, not at, and also as a ‘cloak or concealment which the commentator must penetrate’ if he is perceptive enough.²⁵ Textbooks, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and other aids were created to help in the pursuit of the spiritual sense. Through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the study of the Bible became increasingly the domain of the schools and universities rather than of the monasteries, and scholastic approaches overtook the tradition of *lectio*

²² Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, ed. and trans. by Robertson, p. 84.

²³ Robertson, *Preface to Chaucer*, p. 287.

²⁴ It is worth noting that this is a somewhat simplistic generalization; other terms, definitions, and categories were often used. Beryl Smalley’s survey of the subject in *The Study of the Bible* reveals some of these variations.

²⁵ Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, p. 2, pp. 24–25.

divina. Theologians provided commentaries in the form of glosses, which were then viewed as authoritative sources of the *sentence* of a passage. The increasingly technical process of 'full-scale allegorical interpretation' made it possible to argue that correct exegesis required 'much learning' and that consulting 'tradition' or the ancient authorities was the best way to discover spiritual meaning.²⁶

Wyclif acknowledged the traditional four-fold sense of scripture,²⁷ but he re-considered the relationship among the four.²⁸ In particular, Wyclif followed in the tradition of Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Lyra, and Richard Fitzralph in their re-consideration and, to some extent, resurrection, of the literal sense. Aquinas, influenced by Aristotelian logic, recognized the unity of body and soul and, correspondingly, of letter and spirit: the 'spirit' of scripture is not something 'hidden behind or added on to' the text, but something 'expressed by the text'.²⁹ The literal sense is therefore seen as 'broad enough to encompass the spiritual senses', meaning that rather than locating the spiritual meanings of the text 'beneath the letter, Aquinas place[d] them within the letter itself'.³⁰ Aquinas redefined the literal to incorporate much that had been formerly classified as 'spiritual', something that Nicholas of Lyra also does.³¹ Nicholas is responsible for the phrase *duplex sensus litteralis* which has been described as 'the high-water mark of literalistic exegesis'.³² By this phrase, Nicholas meant that the literal sense has two meanings: one is the 'surface, immediate' meaning of the words and the other is the 'figurative or christological' meaning, meanings that would traditionally be described using the four-fold description of literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses.³³ Fitzralph, influenced by Aquinas and Nicholas, adopted Nicholas's *duplex sensus litteralis*, which effectively recast 'the older distinction between the "literal" and the "spiritual"' into 'a distinction between two aspects of the "literal"', and also asserted that the literal sense is the meaning intended by the author.³⁴ As Kantik Ghosh puts it,

²⁶ Minnis, "Authorial Intention" and "Literal Sense", p. 24.

²⁷ Wyclif, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, ed. and trans. by Levy, p. 104. The traditional understanding of the four-fold sense of scripture is also included in the General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible.

²⁸ Levy, *John Wyclif*, p. 71.

²⁹ Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, p. 293.

³⁰ Levy, *John Wyclif*, pp. 75, 74.

³¹ Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 13.

³² Minnis, "Authorial Intention" and "Literal Sense", p. 4.

³³ Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 13.

³⁴ Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 14.

the work of these three theologians attempts to redefine the literal sense in a way that ‘does not substantially alter but instead “repackages” inherited exegetical norms.’³⁵

Wyclif, like these predecessor theologians, asserted that the literal sense is that intended by the author, who is God; in other words, the literal sense is not a veil, but an essential basis of meaning, from which other senses might emerge. To Wyclif, the literal sense is

that sense of scripture which the Holy Spirit primarily intends so that the faithful soul would journey upwards into God. In one instance it is the historical, as is clearly the case with the deeds of Christ [...]. At another time it is the moral or tropological [...]. And again it is allegorical [...]. While in another instance it is surely anagogical.³⁶

Wyclif understood that it is possible to glean four distinct senses from the same text, which creates not just a *duplex sensus litteralis*, but also a *triplex* and *quadruplex* sense.³⁷ But all of these other senses rely fully on (and are brought to light by) the literal sense, rather than being hidden behind it. Because the spiritual meaning of scripture becomes accessible through the literal sense, as Alastair Minnis puts it, the ‘Bible itself provided its best critical apparatus.’³⁸ Uncoupling exegesis from sacred scripture and arguing that the literal sense contains the complete ‘apparatus’ for understanding the divine meaning leads Lollards to the conclusion that ‘the ancients have no monopoly on inspiration’ and that the Bible, allowed to stand in its original state, is ‘opyn to undirstonding of simple men.’³⁹ The radical implications of this understanding of scripture provided the basis for Lollard theories of Bible reading and challenged the tradition that located the text’s spiritual sense in an external or additional structure of glosses and authorities.

Wyclif’s understanding of the literal sense made it possible to reject, at least in theory, the necessity for any glosses at all. By conceiving of a world in which ‘faith is the highest theology’ and therefore ‘every Christian must be a theologian,’ Wyclif effectively established an unglossed text as a theoretical ideal.⁴⁰

³⁵ Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 14.

³⁶ Wyclif, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, p. 104.

³⁷ Levy, *John Wyclif*, p. 101.

³⁸ Minnis, “Authorial Intention” and “Literal Sense”, p. 25.

³⁹ Minnis, “Authorial Intention” and “Literal Sense”, p. 24; ‘The General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible’, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Wyclif, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, p. 300.

In practice, however, Wyclif 'was far too medieval to reject the fathers or to imagine the sacred page wiped clean of its glosses'.⁴¹ Wyclif, and most Lollards after him, acknowledged the divine inspiration behind the patristic commentaries of scripture and their valuable role in the interpretation of the Word; the Lollards' own *Glossed Gospels*, their religious handbooks the *Floretum* and *Rosarium*, and their sermon cycle, all draw on the commentaries of the fathers. What Wyclif did reject was the more recent hermeneutical practices that marked contemporary academia, in particular the imposition of modern glosses which he considered the work of 'heretics' twisting the scripture to 'suit their own perverse sense' rather than keeping to the sense of the holy doctors.⁴² The friars whom, Lollards claimed, 'glosoun [the gospel] as hem liketh',⁴³ were seen as particularly guilty here (a perspective that, as the case of the friar in Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale* suggests, was shared by others⁴⁴). Their glosses needed to be removed, according to the Lollards, because they were both corrupt (for example, more interested in furthering the agenda of the friars than in elucidating the truth) and excessive — at risk of 'suffocating' and obscuring the text they were meant to be serving.⁴⁵ Perhaps in reaction to this, the glosses in Lollard texts are always carefully distinguished from the text they accompany;⁴⁶ should, for any reason, it be impossible to make a gloss clearly distinct from the text (by being written 'hool bi itself' or 'in the margyn'), Lollard scribes preferred that it be omitted completely.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Lampe, *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, II, 208. As with so many other of Wyclif's teachings, there is evidence that his followers took his criticisms further. Hudson in *The Premature Reformation* provides examples of Lollards who opposed any kind of glossing, rejected the divine inspiration of the Church Fathers, and argued for a *sola scriptura* position (pp. 274–77).

⁴² Wyclif, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, p. 111.

⁴³ *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Hudson, p. 107.

⁴⁴ In Chaucer's tale, the Friar tries to convince the sick Thomas to give him money by preaching according to his own gloss, claiming that the 'text of hooly writ' is too hard for any but clerks to understand. See Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Benson, p. 130 (l. 1790).

⁴⁵ Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 7; Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, pp. 274–75.

⁴⁶ See, for example, the manuscripts of the Lollard sermon cycle in which the preacher's comment on the biblical text, even when it is 'limited to an adverb or the repetition of a noun or a verb', is 'meticulously excluded' from the rubrication that marks the biblical translation (Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, p. 271).

⁴⁷ Quoted in Lampe, *Cambridge History of the Bible*, p. 413. The quotation is from a rubric to a translation of the book of Isaiah found in Lambeth Palace, MS 1033 and refers to a 'short glose' supposedly accompanying the book (though, in fact, absent).

The provision of accurate and unadulterated scripture, stripped of coverings corrupt and worldly in nature, and the creation of reliable study aids based on the authoritative teachings of the fathers, were key components of a Lollard model of Bible reading.⁴⁸ The effectiveness of this model, however, ultimately depended on the moral quality, and motivations, of the reader. For Lollards, what becomes most necessary in the process of correct interpretation is a humble, pious frame of mind and divine illumination, the former making the latter possible;⁴⁹ Wyclif wrote that ‘the meaning of scripture is comprehended through devotion’.⁵⁰ Such a state of mind, combined with a text shorn of its obstructive coverings, enables a reader to receive the spiritual meaning (which is no less than the mind of God) from the words themselves. The effective reader for the Lollards is not marked by his learning or clerical status but by his devotion, his love or ‘charite’. The possession of ‘charite’ becomes for Lollards a direct path to the complete understanding of the scriptures. As the General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible puts it, ‘he whos herte is ful of charite comprehendith, withouten eny errour, the manyfoold abundaunce and largest teching of Goddis scripturis, for whi Poul seith, “the fulnesse of lawe is charite”’.⁵¹ While the General Prologue does spend time explaining some scholarly directions and guidelines for reading the scriptures such as the ‘reulis of Austin’ and the ‘iiii undirstondingis of hooly scripture’, it makes clear that these are not an alternative to love: their application will only help ‘simple men’ of ‘good lyvyng and meeknesse’ to understand the text of Holy Writ.⁵² One of the main purposes of the General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible is to defend the ability of the ‘simple’ to understand scripture. ‘Simple’, in this case, essentially means humble, rather than foolish or unintelligent.⁵³ No ‘simple man of wit [should] be aferd unmesurabli to studie in the text of holy writ’ asserts the author, and

⁴⁸ For an interesting discussion of reading models that walk a ‘*via media* between increasingly polarized lollard and anti-lollard positions’, see Schirmer, chap. 3 in this volume.

⁴⁹ In this respect, Lollard and anti-Lollard reading models share a number of traits, even if their goals and reasons differ; for an anti-Lollard reading model that takes these instructions in a different direction, see Uselmann, chap. 6 in this volume.

⁵⁰ Wyclif, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, p. 93.

⁵¹ ‘The General Prologue’, p. 45.

⁵² ‘The General Prologue’, p. 49. In all, the General Prologue refers to the four understandings of scripture (‘literal, allegoric, moral, and anagogic’) (‘The General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible’, p. 43), the seven rules of Tyconius (pp. 46–48), and Augustine’s instruction on the seven steps of reading the scriptures taken from *On Christian Doctrine* (p. 50).

⁵³ ‘Simple’ can have both these meanings (*MED* s.v. ‘simple’, def. 2a and def. 5).

‘cristen men and wymmen, olde and yonge, shulden studie fast in the newe testament, for it is ful of autorite, and opyn to undirstonding of simple men, as to the poyntis that be moost nedeful to salvacioun.’⁵⁴ In contrast, ‘wisdom schal not entre into an yvel willid soule’ and those who come to the scriptures seeking only the ‘world and fleschly eese [...] maken himself deppere dampned.’⁵⁵ In this emphasis on personal piety Lollards are, to some extent, merely aligning themselves with an orthodox tradition which prioritizes love over intellectual pursuit; many Christians acknowledged that Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 8. 1 (‘knowledge puffs up, but love builds up’) made the reader’s motivation the determinant of correct interpretation and fruitful reading. However, written in the vernacular and potentially reaching the very ‘lewed’ men and women it described, this traditional defence of the ‘simple’ and the power of ‘charite’ became, in the hands of the Lollards, a challenge to the status quo which had reserved the spiritual sense of scripture for the *litterati*.⁵⁶

In sum, then, Lollard understanding of the literal sense as the sense ‘including all manner of figurative senses intended by the author’, who is God, made it possible to free the Bible and the reader from the contemporary ‘discourse of glossing’.⁵⁷ The Lollard model claimed that in the hands of the effective reader, the naked text offers nothing less than the revelation of the mind of God. These hermeneutical niceties were, however, easily lost on an opposition which interpreted Lollard actions as a form of base literalism, a sign that Lollard readers were attending only to the words ‘and not inclynyng to the cense of the same’.⁵⁸ The multiple understandings of the ‘literal sense’ no doubt caused a great deal

⁵⁴ ‘The General Prologue’, p. 2. This successful combination of learning and spiritual humility and devotion is exemplified by the author of the General Prologue who discusses his part in the translation process. He identifies himself as a ‘symple creature’ who has needed to live a ‘clene lif [...] ful devout in preiers’ in order to even attempt the translation. While he acknowledges the technicalities of the work — the difficulties of ensuring accurate translation of equivocal words, for example — he gives equal attention to the need to free his ‘wit’ from preoccupation with ‘worldly thingis’. The translator sees that both the act of translating and the act of reading (or ‘understanding’) Holy Writ must come from a combination of ‘good lyvyng and greet travel [travail]’ for only then can the translator be assured of the Holy Spirit’s guidance, keeping him from error (‘The General Prologue’, pp. 59–60).

⁵⁵ ‘The General Prologue’, p. 50.

⁵⁶ We could contrast Richard Rolle here who also speaks about the power of the ‘simple and unlearned’ to know God but who wrote in Latin. See Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, ed. and trans. by Wolters, p. 46.

⁵⁷ Dove, ‘Wyclif and the English Bible’, p. 317; Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, p. 271.

of misunderstanding but the vagaries of meaning could also be deliberately exploited by both sides in the debate.

'The lettere sleeth': Lollards Redefine Glosses

According to the testimony of at least two Lollard tracts, Paul's famous words 'the letter kills, but the spirit gives life' were used as a particular form of slander against the Lollards. One tract, which Mary Dove titles 'Cambridge Tract IX', is taken from a collection of twelve written in support of Bible translation,⁵⁹ and it begins dramatically by listing the 'armes of anticristis disciples agenes trewe men' as three types of slander: the first is that the Lollards are heretics, the second is that they are hypocrites, and the third is that 'the letter sleeth' (fol. 47a). The writer deals with each accusation in turn, always turning the accusation around and against the enemies. Thus, the writer explains, enemies will attack a man with the accusation of heresy, and yet all the time they themselves are the heretics for they 'don cursed synnes and mentene hem agenes holy writ' (fol. 48b). Likewise, good men who truly repent and forsake the world are accused of being hypocrites by their enemies, but, in truth, it is these accusers who are the hypocrites, calling themselves Christians and yet being traitors to Christ. When these two slanders fail to move the good Lollard, Antichrist's disciples attack him with the words of St Paul: 'the letter sleeth but the goostly understandynge schal be taken and not as the letter sowneth',⁶⁰ implying that Lollards listen only to the letter and disregard scriptural injunction to take the spiritual understanding, an accusation Lollards were also quick to throw back at their enemies (fol. 48b).

Having cited this accusation, the tract expounds the real meaning of Paul's words: 'And the holy gost understandeth this: that the letter of Moyses lawe

⁵⁹ The collection is found in Cambridge University Library, MS Ii.6.26 and forms the majority of the contents of the fifteenth-century manuscript. The material has clearly been deliberately gathered together to make as strong a case as possible for the need for vernacular scripture. The tracts and their relations are described by Hunt in 'An Edition of Tracts in Favour of Scriptural Translation', and have been discussed and edited more recently in *The Earliest Advocates of the English Bible*, ed. by Dove, pp. xxxiii–xlix and pp. 89–142; Cambridge Tract IX is on pp. 122–23. The tracts are also discussed by Deanesly in *The Lollard Bible*, pp. 270–74, and by Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, p. 424. Parenthetical citations in the text are to the folio numbers.

⁶⁰ The word 'sowneth' or 'sownen' when applied to a word or phrase means the literal meaning of that word or phrase, what is revealed in the wording (*MED* s.v. 'sounen', def. 5c).

understondyn fleischly and not gostly [...] sleeth men [...]. And thei that turneth this falsly to cristis gospel ben perilous heretikes' (fol. 48b). In other words, what Paul is referring to is the fact that now, after the death and resurrection of Christ, the believer needs to understand the Old Testament in spiritual rather than literal terms. To hold on to the rituals and sacrifices of the old law (for example, circumcision) which, having been fulfilled in Christ, should now be understood in a figurative sense (receiving a circumcised heart through conversion or baptism), 'brengeth men to heresie and so sleeth men' (fol. 49a). The writer stresses that this is how the 'holy gost understondith' this scripture and if someone understands 'holy writte other weies than the holy gost wol [does]', that person is a heretic (fol. 48b). To apply this word to 'the letter of Cristis gospel' is to interpret the verse 'falsly' and this is what 'brengeth men to heresie and so sleeth men' (fol. 49a).⁶¹ In this way, the Lollard author is able to reverse the argument by demonstrating that it is his enemies' erroneous interpretations of scripture that kill the soul, not the 'letter of the gospel'. From here, the writer turns the tables on his enemies and accuses them of blasphemy against Christ by the way they exalt their own glosses above scripture:

these disciples of antecrist seyn prively in these wordis that the wordis of Jhesu Crist ben fals and of non autorite but the understondynge that thei han to plesynge of the flesch and colourynge of synne is trewe. And so thei maken Crist a fool and fals, and himself wiser and trewer than Christ. (fol. 49a)

Here, the false interpretations of these 'disciples of antecrist' are associated with fleshliness ('the plesynge of the flesch'), suggesting that as these false teachings supplant the words of Christ so the spirit is supplanted by the flesh.

A second Lollard tract, the late fourteenth-century text known as *The Holi Prophete David Seith*, also considers how Paul's words in II Corinthians 3. 6 are used against the Lollards.⁶² It encourages 'cristene men' to 'be not to moche

⁶¹ It is worth noting that the infamous corrupt Friar in Chaucer's *The Summoner's Tale* might be counted among the Lollards' enemies here for he too interprets Paul's verse that the 'lettere sleeth' as if it applies to exegesis (therefore giving him an excuse to apply his own 'glorious' glossing), rather than to the difference between the Old and New Testaments.

⁶² *The Holi Prophete David Seith* is a tract found in Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.6.31. It dates from the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Both Talbert in his survey of Wycliffite writings ('Wyclif and his Followers', pp. 354–80) and Deanesly, who first edited the text, consider the tract to be a work by Wyclif, but this is unlikely. Mary Dove's introduction to her edition, which carefully and consistently refers to the text's anonymous 'writer', appears to agree (Dove, *The Earliest Advocates*, pp. liv–lvi). Its existence in this particular manuscript reveals that, whatever its provenance, it circulated among readers within the London

aferid of obiecciouns of enemyes seyyng that “þe lettere sleep” and states assuredly that ‘Poul menyþ þus [...] þat cerymonyes eipir [or] sacrifices of þe elde lawe wiþoutyn goostli vndirstondyng of þe newe lawe, sleep men bi errour of mysbileue [...]. Goostli vndirstondyng of ceremonyes and sacrifices of Moises lawe quekenþ men of riȝt bileue’.⁶³ To interpret this verse in any other way, continues the writer, is to ‘mystaken þe wordis of hooly writ’.⁶⁴ Providing many scriptural verses that show how ‘hooly [...] miȝty and ful profitable’ is the word of God, the writer condemns those who by ‘weiward menyng and here wickide lyuyng bryngen in deef of soule, þat is, synne’.⁶⁵ That this ‘weiward menyng’ is chiefly expressed in glosses is apparent in the writer’s criticism of the enemies of truth who declare that scripture is incomplete in order that they may ‘clepin her ownene errour hooli writ’ and declare that their own ‘fleischli vndirstondyng is trewe and of auctorite’.⁶⁶ The erroneous teaching of these ‘diuers clerkis’ is repeatedly associated with the flesh: boasting of their ‘trewe vndirstonding’ of holy writ, these clerks are in fact ‘disseyued of þe deuel [...] and of þere fleisch’; their interpretation of untouchable Mount Sinai as a symbol of Holy Writ is not only ‘weiwardli’ but also ‘fleischli’.⁶⁷ Like the author of the previous tract, the writer rounds on his enemies and shows that it is *their* misinterpretation, contained in glosses (and therefore embodied) and masquerading as the spiritual sense of the Bible, that kills the soul.

By both of these methods — the recourse to an alternative (and well-accepted)⁶⁸ exposition of II Corinthians 3. 6, and the accusations of error — the Lollards are able to defend their position and accuse their opponents of failing to interpret scripture correctly, misapplying scripture, and taking it out of context: of being, in short, bad readers. Lollards use the language thrown at them (‘sleeth’, ‘deeth of soule’), redefining these accusations in terms fully grounded in scripture, reinforcing (if only for themselves) their identity as effective readers. Furthermore, from the Lollard point of view, the point that

merchant class as a ‘common-profit book’. The quotations here come from Dove, *The Earliest Advocates*, pp. 150–59.

⁶³ *Holi Prophete*, p. 156.

⁶⁴ *Holi Prophete*, p. 156.

⁶⁵ *Holi Prophete*, p. 156.

⁶⁶ *Holi Prophete*, p. 154, p. 155.

⁶⁷ *Holi Prophete*, pp. 152–53, p. 157.

⁶⁸ The difference between the two covenants (Old and New, Letter and Spirit) had been the primary interpretation of this verse since the time of Augustine. See Alford, ‘Scriptural Testament in *The Canterbury Tales*’, p. 200.

their opponents' bad reading is born not of ignorance or stupidity, but rather of a malicious desire to manipulate the word of God in order to advance the agendas of those who oppose Lollardy, confirms the Lollard theory discussed above: those who are fleshly or without good intent will not be able to grasp the true meaning of scripture. This is stated openly in a Wycliffite sermon which takes II Corinthians 3 as its theme. Having made reference to the difference between the Old and New Covenant, and the difference between living by the letter and by the spirit, the sermon writer pulls no punches in pointing out the ulterior motives of Antichrist's disciples (who are openly identified as the 'four sectis', a term which, though used variously, typically includes the mendicant orders):

antecristis truauntis spekyn agen the newe lawe, and seyen that literal witt of it shulde nevere be takun but goostly witt; and they *feynen* this goostli witt aftir shrewed wille that thei have. And thus thes four sectis ben aboute to distrye literal witt of Goddis lawe; and this shulde be first and the moste by which the chirche shulde be reulid. And agenus this witt anticrist argueth many weyes: 'that hooli witt is fals bi this bi many partis of holi witt, and so ther is another witt than this literal witt that thou hast yoven, and this is a *mysti witt*, the whiche Y wole chese to gyve'. And thus faylith autorite of hooli witt bi anticrist.⁶⁹

Using provocative and extreme language, the sermon writer argues that the religious orders assert a spiritual sense of scripture over the literal sense in order that they may fabricate ('feynen') an exposition that will promote their own agenda. The writer goes so far as to say that according to the mendicants ('antecristis truauntis'), the literal sense is flawed and often false and that the 'mysti witt' is to be preferred. Here the private orders (and, by association, the devil) are being associated with a preference for the unclear and mysterious which, of course, gives more power to those who are supposedly 'in the know'. Knowledge becomes more exclusive, arbitrary, and without value, as is here implied by the words 'Y wol chese to give' with their sense of only some being 'chosen'. The words imply that, according to the teaching of the 'four sectis', it is necessary to apply knowledge beyond what scripture provides in order to understand the message truly. In these ways, and others, the sermon writer asserts, Antichrist seeks to 'hide and derk the lawe of Crist' while promoting his own agenda.⁷⁰ While the rhetoric chooses to distort the actual position of the friars and frames the argument in absolute terms, it does recognize the extent to which, within the traditional church, biblical interpretation has come to rely more on individual interpretation (or whim) than on the biblical text.

⁶⁹ *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson and Gradon, I, 652–53. My italics.

⁷⁰ *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson and Gradon, I, 655.

The Lollard view takes this perception of glosses to its logical conclusion by inverting the accepted understanding of the ‘letter kills and the spirit gives life’ and showing that it is the letter (literal, ‘naked’ text, as understood by Lollardy) that gives life, so that the glosses supposedly contain the false or incomplete spiritual sense that can kill the soul. Glosses, like these arguments of their enemies, are seen to be a product of misinterpretation of the Word designed to assert selfish agendas. Promoting themselves as ‘gostly’, the glosses are rather the product of a very fleshly and literalistic frame of mind, utterly disengaged from the purposes of Christ and instead serving the purposes of the world and Antichrist. To remove them is therefore to purge the text, returning it to its originary state and allowing it to be revealed as it is supposed to be. What the Lollards propose, then, is a situation where the reader is faced with the Bible text first and foremost, privileging the significance of the direct relationship between reader and scripture, a relationship that is absolutely dependent on the inner worth or quality of that reader.

Physical and Spiritual Reading

While the shorter tract from the Cambridge collection is written purely to challenge three particular accusations against Lollards, the much longer *Holi Prophete David Seith* situates its treatment of this ‘slander’ in the context of a broader discussion about the nature of good and bad reading, a discussion that further redefines traditional ideas about interpretation in favour of the Lollard position. *Holi Prophete* seems to have been written in order to refute the arguments of translation opponents, arguments which are here defined as slanders against the Bible itself. Thus to say ‘þe lettere sleep’ is to imply that scripture itself is ‘harmful to men and fals and repreuable’, and to suggest that ‘lewid men’ should not ‘touche’ the scripture is to deny the truth of God’s word when it promises many benefits to those who read and receive it.⁷¹ Drawing heavily on St Bernard’s thirty-sixth sermon on the Song of Songs, *Holi Prophete* locates this discussion about Bible reading in the broader issue of the acquiring of knowledge.

Following Bernard, and drawing from Paul’s comment that the man who ‘gessip hymself to kunne [know] onyþyng woot not 3it hou it bihouep hym to kunne’ (1 Corinthians 8. 2), the author distinguishes between two types of knowledge that can also be described as two different ways of knowing: the

⁷¹ *Holi Prophete*, p. 156, pp. 157–59.

knowledge that puffs up, that is sought simply for the sake of knowledge, personal gain, or vanity, and the greater wisdom which is the ability to know how to know, or to ‘cunne [...] þe maner of kunnyng’.⁷² Paul’s words indicate that the only way to profit from studies in any field is to know by ‘what ordre’, by ‘what studie’, and for ‘what ende’ one learns.⁷³ Applying this to the study of holy writ, the tract makes clear that effective readers are established in this right manner of learning, whereas bad readers are not.⁷⁴ Reading with the wrong motives and refusing to obey the word that they read, bad readers are ‘grete foolis’ and the knowledge they acquire lacks spiritual substance: they have exchanged ‘Hooli Goost trewe vnderstandyng of hooli writ’ with ‘presumcioun of mannes witt’ which brings forth ‘pride, veynglorie and boost’.⁷⁵ This point is emphasized throughout the tract through the use of imagery of physical corruption. These ‘veyn clerkis’ study holy writ for ‘wombe ioie’, ‘delices bodeli, ese and ydilnesse’.⁷⁶ Their knowledge, which is not converted into good living, is compared to undigested meat that ‘gendriþ yuele humours and corruppiþ þe bodi and not norischip’.⁷⁷ Through their ‘mystakyng’ of scripture, they ‘poison’ themselves.⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, these bad and fleshly readers are also identified with the letter: they are described as seeking to ‘kunne þe *lettre* of Goddis lawe’ while failing to keep its ‘sentence’.⁷⁹ By this literal ‘maner’ of reading they ‘sclaundren þe lawe of God’.⁸⁰ The act of misunderstanding scripture reveals the intention of the one doing the reading; their poor intention is evident in their unimproved behaviour, for to read and understand the ‘sentence’ of God’s word is to remake oneself accordingly. Furthermore, in a somewhat vicious cycle, the inability of these readers to receive the ‘sentence’, wisdom, or true understanding of the word is put down to their bad living for (just as the General Prologue explains, using the same quotation from the Book of Wisdom) ‘wisdom schal not entre into an yuel-willid soule’.⁸¹ Going on to an example from the Gospel,

⁷² *Holi Prophete*, p. 151.

⁷³ *Holi Prophete*, pp. 151–52.

⁷⁴ *Holi Prophete*, p. 152.

⁷⁵ *Holi Prophete*, p. 153, p. 151.

⁷⁶ *Holi Prophete*, p. 153, p. 152.

⁷⁷ *Holi Prophete*, p. 152.

⁷⁸ *Holi Prophete*, p. 153.

⁷⁹ *Holi Prophete*, p. 151. My italics.

⁸⁰ *Holi Prophete*, p. 151.

⁸¹ *Holi Prophete*, p. 153.

the author quotes Christ's comment to the Sadducees, 'ye erren, ye kunne not the scripturis neither the vertu of God' (Matthew 22. 29), and follows with this exposition:

[W]isli Crist repreueþ first þe necligence of hem, for þei redder not. Þe secunde tyme he repreueþ here ignorance, for þei knewyn not God, for þe science of God comeþ of diligence of redynge. Truli, [...] if not alle men redynge knowyn God, hou schal he knowe þat rediþ not? Þanne men redynge know no treuþe whanne þei redyn not wyllynge to fynde treuþe [...]. Gessist þou þat prestis of saduceis redder not scripturis? But þei myȝte not fynde God in hem, for þei wolde not lyue worþili to God. For goode wordis myȝte not teche hem þe whiche here yuele werkis tauȝten þat is blyndid in errour.⁸²

The initial statement that the Sadducees 'redder not' is contradicted, only a few lines later, by the acknowledgement that of course the Sadducees read scripture. The author forces us, then, to make a distinction between two different kinds of reading, which could be described as physical (or bodily) reading and spiritual reading. The reading of the Sadducees, stubborn-hearted and unwilling to find or accept God's truth, becomes a mere physical act which is essentially empty ('þouȝ he rede euere, he schal neuere fynde'⁸³). This contrasts with the reading that is a process of discovering God himself and not just the 'kunynge of God'.⁸⁴ Anyone can do the first, but the second can only be performed by those who 'wole [would] fynde God' and whose good living 'openep þe wai of treuþe'.⁸⁵

Alongside its depiction of bad readers, *Holi Prophete* offers a model of the worthy reader of scripture. In contrast to these bad readers who read only the 'lettre' of God's law, good readers are described as reading busily 'the *text* of holi writ', a word that implies the holistic Word: letter *and* spirit, the literal sense *and* the spiritual sense, according to the Lollard understanding.⁸⁶ In common with other Lollard descriptions, the ideal reader is identified by his honourable motivations (he reads for the purest of Christian motives: to 'lerne more brennyngli þat þyng þat lediþ greetliere to þe loue of God and neȝebour'⁸⁷) and his godly lifestyle (he brings to the study of the Word his devotion manifested in

⁸² *Holi Prophete*, pp. 153–54.

⁸³ *Holi Prophete*, p. 154.

⁸⁴ *Holi Prophete*, p. 154.

⁸⁵ *Holi Prophete*, p. 153, p. 154.

⁸⁶ *Holi Prophete*, p. 150. My italics.

⁸⁷ *Holi Prophete*, p. 152.

his good life, this good living being a 'lanterne to brynge men to veri vndirstondyng of holi writ'⁸⁸). The ideal reader is ready to pray, repent, and submit himself to the authority of more learned and godly men.⁸⁹ The good spiritual disposition of the Lollard reader portrayed here allows him to acquire the spiritual knowledge that cannot enter the evil-willed soul.

Making the Word Flesh: Reader Response

A final tract that reveals the importance of Paul's letter-spirit distinction in Lollard-orthodox polemic is the eleventh tract of the Cambridge collection,⁹⁰ but in this case the application of the verse is clearly extended beyond biblical hermeneutics. It is a tract unlike most of the other twelve because its emphasis is on the relationship between spiritual reading and moral living. It begins by describing how an incomprehensible language is a barrier for the man or woman seeking the 'sweet' fruit of the Word. The author uses the images of a tree thick with leaves and a 'derk cloude' to describe what scripture becomes to the 'English man' when it is written in Latin (fol. 52a). After considering these text-centred obstructions to truth, the tract moves on to describe the greatest reader-centred barrier, namely 'wicked lyvyng', which so blinds men that 'they wanten the light of gras [grace] truly to undirstonde holy scripture' (fol. 52a). This confirms what we read in so many other tracts on the subject of vernacular scripture: the truth of scripture will not enter a soul bound by sin, and such a soul may as well try and read the Bible in an unknown language. The writer goes on, applying the familiar words of II Corinthians 3. 6 to ways of living:

Paul seith the letter sleith, that is fleischly lyvers, breakynge the comaundement of god. But the spirit quickeneth [...] alle thoo that lyven feithfully after the gostly undirstondyng of holy writte [...]. Wherefore Paul seith be yee ledde [...] or walke yee with the holy goost and ye schullen not fulfile the synful desires of youre fleische. (fol. 52b)

This verse which, as we have already seen, is commonly interpreted to apply to types of reading or to ways of understanding the Word, is here applied to types of living: 'the letter slays' applies to all those who live according to the

⁸⁸ *Holi Prophete*, p. 153.

⁸⁹ *Holi Prophete*, pp. 155–56.

⁹⁰ Also edited by Mary Dove in *Earliest Advocates*, pp. 126–29. Parenthetical citations in the text are to the folio numbers.

flesh, breaking the commandments of God; ‘the spirit gives life’ applies to all those who live faithfully according to the commandments of God. By using this verse in this way, the tract makes explicit the strong connection between reading and living. Using a verse that is usually applied to processes of reading scripture to characterize ways of living allows the writer to draw on a sense that a Christian is what (or perhaps how) he reads and, likewise, his reading is a reflection of what he is. Just as reading without regard for the spiritual meaning would be wrong, so living without regard for the spirit is wrong. The Word must be applied and lived out in an individual’s life.

This idea of living out the Word — bringing it to life and making it flesh through obedience — is upheld as a definitive mark of the truly discerning reader, one who has read and received the revelation. In their written manifestos in support of Bible access, including the General Prologue, the Lollards use many verbs to describe engaging with the Word, including ‘seeking’, ‘studying’, and ‘keeping’.⁹¹ All ultimately dependent on reading (visually or aurally), these words indicate types of reader response and emphasize the importance of earnest desire, devotion, and obedience in the attitude of the reader. Another equally important word is ‘living’; to know the Word but fail to put it into practice is more dangerous for the soul than ignorance. Applying the Word to life is the required response to reading a text, and is as necessary as the right intent and potentially inseparable from it. It is understood that ‘Hooly scripture comaundith no thing [...] but charite’ and ‘blamith no thing [...] but covetise’ and therefore by reading the scripture one learns how to live in a way that is pleasing to God.⁹² Indeed, it should be read in order to be lived. The author of *Holi Prophete* comes near to defining the scripture as a personal moral guide book, given to us that we may see ‘þerynne our defautis and amende hem’.⁹³ The ‘entent’ in reading scripture, he reiterates, is for readers ‘to knowe here owene freelte and dafautis and eschewe deedli synnes, and to kepe wilfulli þe comaundementis of God, and to do þe werkis of merci and 3ewe hooli ensample to here ne3ebours’.⁹⁴ The life of the truly discerning reader will itself be both an interpre-

⁹¹ The idea that readers (men and women, young and old) should ‘studie fast’ the Bible is found throughout the General Prologue, and the verbs ‘study’ and ‘keep’ are frequently coupled with ‘redyng’ or ‘knowing’ (see, for example, ‘The General Prologue’, pp. 2, 30, 39, 48). For those who do not have leisure to ‘seeke alle holy scriptures’ or ‘perse alle the preuytes of scripturis’, fidelity to the spirit of charity is enough (p. 46).

⁹² ‘The General Prologue’, p. 44.

⁹³ *Holi Prophete*, p. 152.

⁹⁴ *Holi Prophete*, p. 152.

tation of the scripture and an 'open' text that others can 'read' to find scripture declared. In this way, 'life', as Wyclif wrote, 'is the best interpreter of scripture'.⁹⁵

In contrast, ineffective readers will live lives that are out of joint with the message of the Gospel, living proof of their bad attitude at heart. Lollards argued that the opposition of the religious orders to biblical translation or lay preaching of biblical text originated in clerics' fear that the unglossed text would expose their own faults.⁹⁶ Thus the seventh tract in the Cambridge collection states that 'oure antecristis now, suyng [following] the farisees [Pharisees], tellen not verilich the truthe of the gospel, for thei lyven contrariouly therto; and Crist biddith his children deeme after the wirkis' (fol. 43a). The same tract makes an allusion to the glossing practices of 'oure religious' (who are compared to three biblical enemies of God: Cain, Dathan and Abiram) and claims that they 'wolden that the gospel slepe safe, for thei ben clepid cristyne of manye: thei prechen sumwhat of the gospel, and glosen it as hem liketh' (fol. 42b). According to Wyclif, friars avoid preaching the Gospel for fear that 'ther synne shulde be knowun, and hou thei ben not groundid in God to come into the chirche' and thus 'they wolden not for drede that Goddis lawe were knowun in Englisch'.⁹⁷ The 'open', 'naked' text of the Lollards thus has the potential to ungloss not only the text, but also the very lives of the friars and others like them, exposing them for what they are and reinscribing the connection between reading and living. The Pharisaic way of life of those in religious orders can be compared to a kind of false glossing on their own lives. Just as a life that is well lived provides a literal embodiment of the true contents of the Bible, a life dressed up in hypocrisy and disobedience reflects the false glosses attached to the Word. Such a life becomes a dissembling text whose outward adornments and flourishes obscure its true contents. Furthermore the 'naked' (in the positive sense of 'originary', 'pristine', and accurate) biblical text would also render such hypocrites naked (in the negative sense of 'exposed' and 'impoverished'). The naked text is a text that exposes the lives and hearts of others, making it a threat to those who have something to hide; bad living becomes another way to detect bad readers.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 61. We witness another dimension of this process of 'bringing the word to life' in Lollard practices of scripture memorization, a process that, as Ralph Hanna says, turned people into 'walking books', another form of incarnating the Word. See Hanna, 'The Difficulty of Ricardian Prose Translation', p. 333.

⁹⁶ *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Hudson, p. 190.

⁹⁷ Besserman, 'Glosyng is a Glorious Thyng', p. 70.

⁹⁸ Alford comes to a similar conclusion in his discussion about the Friar as glossator in

Aware of themselves as dwelling in the ‘controversial cultural space’⁹⁹ of vernacular theology, an area of debate and struggle, Lollards — just as much as other vernacular writers — found it strategic to identify and disassociate themselves from their enemies, who were marked as those who see, and read, according to the letter and not according to the spirit. Lollards used the same essential terms of the debate (letter versus spirit, in which ‘literal’ and ‘fleshly’ are always terms of insult) but exploited the fact that definitions of these terms were not set in stone. With the reading of scripture so central to their doctrine and survival, Lollards took great care to describe the reading process and the requirements necessary, namely the well-intentioned reader and the unadulterated and ‘open’ text, for reading to occur effectively. The ‘science of God’ may come from ‘diligence of redyng’, as *Holi Prophete* suggests, but ‘redyng’ is a loaded term here and, in this context, refers to a very specific kind of engagement with the text. Responding to the accusation that they were ineffective readers who read only the ‘letter’ gave Lollards further opportunity to effectively renegotiate the meaning of terms like ‘reading’, ‘knowledge’, ‘letter’, and ‘spirit’ in order to reclaim the territory of biblical hermeneutics.

The Summoner’s Tale. He describes how the Friar glosses both the ‘true intent’ of the Bible and also his own behaviour, putting on the face that ‘will best serve his own advantage’ (Alford, ‘Scriptural Testament’, p. 199).

⁹⁹ Nicholas Watson, ‘Censorship and Cultural Change’, p. 852.

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SPECULUM VITAE AND 'LEWED' READING

Kathryn Vulić

This essay investigates some of the ways in which rudimentary education in the catechism might offer a model for thinking about text, reading, and literary interpretive skills. I argue that lay catechumens might have been trained, directly and indirectly, to understand some basic principles of rhetoric and literary analysis through the way they were taught to think about and recite their prayers. I explore the concept of informal religious instruction by examining an important catechetical text, *Speculum vitae*, a mid-to-late fourteenth-century verse *summa* from northern England, structured as an exposition of the Paternoster prayer. This poem explains Paternoster hermeneutics and transforms these theoretical interpretive models into a guide for lay practice, stating that it is written for all Christians and particularly those who understand English and do not have clerical training. This roughly 16,000-line poem analyses the Paternoster thoroughly and expansively, asserting that though this prayer is the simplest and most basic prayer of the Catholic faith, it is nevertheless a gateway text that helps the unlettered to gain access to theological knowledge without clerical mediation. *Speculum vitae* shows that the Paternoster, the single prayer that Christ offers to his disciples as a model for all prayer, suffices for all devotional needs; the poem is an exhaustive manual containing and connecting all the major principles which ideally govern the daily practice of Christian life, guiding worshippers to understand how prayer helps the individual to live according to those principles, and subsuming all of these principles under the various petitions that constitute the prayer by associating each principle with a prayer word or phrase.

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To accomplish this long list of goals, the poem must introduce its audience to the idea of prayer — both to the text of a fixed-form prayer, the Paternoster, and to the mental practices necessary to think about it effectively. Furthermore, *Speculum vitae* suggests that the key to mastering the practice of prayer lies in comprehending the theological complexity underlying the Paternoster and training the will to invoke that complex range of meanings each time a worshipper says the prayer. This poem is a theological primer that introduces a male or female lay hearer (or reader) to the analysis not just of a text written by man, but also written by God.

Speculum vitae treats learning about prayer as an introduction to an intellectual discipline, a discipline that specifically demands grammatical and lexical savvy and mental vigour. The poem also teaches its readers how to think about a language that can operate on different registers — the ways in which people communicate with each other are ostensibly easier to interpret than the ways in which God communicates with people. I demonstrate that the poem cultivates the reader's imaginative insight, helping readers to attribute to prayer a power that can only be ascribed to divine language; readers come to see that by engaging with the words of the prayer they also invoke holy intervention, seeking God's grace with the reading, speaking, or thinking of each word. Ultimately, I argue, by teaching an audience how to unpack the deeply encoded and allusive divine language of the Paternoster, the text equips its audience with interpretive models to analyse any verbal object, whether it be spoken or written, human or divine. In so doing, the poem indirectly teaches a number of rhetorical speaking and interpreting skills which resemble strikingly those that form part of the formally taught grammatical arts.

The poem assumes a broadly inclusive audience of literates and illiterates,¹ laity and clergy, and offers each group ways of thinking about their habits of

¹ *Speculum vitae* states only that it expects that 'Alle vndirstandys ynglych tonge' (*Speculum vitae*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, 1, 81); though it calls attention to its assumption that all understand English, it does not discuss at all the ability of its audience to understand written text. Indeed, the poem appears to assume that audience literacy is immaterial to its purpose. My use of the terms 'literate' and 'illiterate' should not be taken to suggest that the poem is interested in distinguishing between the two. Instead, the poem seeks to teach its audience to develop an important subset of literacy skills. Ian Frederick Moulton reminds us that 'The broader definition of literacy [...] is the older one. The Latin adjective "litteratus" means not only able to read or write, but also "learned", and "critically skilled"' (Moulton, ed., *Reading and Literacy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, p. xii), all within a Latin textual context; though *Speculum vitae* does not purport to teach reading or writing in any language, it is trying to teach its audience the learning and critical skills that the text itself says are generally found among the Latin-educated clergy.

engaging with spoken language. Despite their lack of experience in engaging with the written word, illiterates can nevertheless use literacy skills and practices to analyse what they say and hear, if not what they read; literates are reminded that spoken and heard language is subject to interpretation in just the same way that written language is. Literate or not, worshippers praying the Paternoster are positioned as readers in the poem by virtue of their ability to recite and interpret the fixed text of the prayer; the skills these readers acquire to pray the Paternoster can well equip them to become readers and interpreters of other spoken or written words, once the skills are taught.

Learning to Pray God's Words

Speculum vitae, an anonymously written poem from the third quarter of the fourteenth century, survives in forty-five manuscripts and fragments, the earliest of which dates from c. 1375.² A prose version of *Speculum vitae*, *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, also survives in four fifteenth-century manuscripts. These two texts are part of a larger tradition of translations and adaptations of the late thirteenth-century French *Somme des vicis et vertus* or *Somme le Roi* by the Dominican friar Lorens d'Orléans, which in turn is a translation of *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus*, written in the third quarter of the thirteenth century by the Dominican William Peraldus. Other Middle English translations of the *Somme le Roi* survive as well, many of them quite well-known, such as *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, *Ayenbite of Inwit*, and *Jacob's Well*. With forty full or partial extant witnesses, *Speculum vitae* is a particularly well-attested translation of the *Somme le Roi*, suggesting that it may have been a popular and a relatively widely circulated version of the work. Although all of the Middle English redactions of the *Somme le Roi* have roughly the same content, *Speculum vitae* and *Myrour*

The recent scholarly work on medieval literacy is abundant; my article develops a trend through many of these recent arguments that, as Steven Justice puts it, "Literacy", clearly, must mean something different from the mere ability to make and construe the written word' (Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, p. 52). The scholarship that most informs my own is interested in defining an expanded meaning of literacy and exploring the ways in which literacy skills are acquired and employed outside of churches and monasteries, especially those recent studies that explore women's literacy and lay reading practices, for example: Krug, *Reading Families*; Moulton, ed., *Reading and Literacy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*; and Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*.

² *Speculum vitae*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, pp. xiv–lxiii. The earliest manuscript is BL, MS Additional 33995. Hanna discusses the false attributions to William of Nassington and Richard Rolle in pp. lx–lxiii.

differ slightly from the other members of this family of texts in that they specifically organize their material to depend on the Paternoster prayer; the conceit of these two expositions is that the prayer itself contains within it all the religious ideas, advice, and instructions that an individual need know in order to be a good Christian, and these texts therefore show the relationships between the various theological points and the section of the Paternoster most relevant to them. To teach the Paternoster prayer, the texts state, is to teach the entirety of the Christian faith.

Among the vast number of ways to communicate human desires, church teachings identify the Paternoster prayer, a fixed-form prayer, as the most important of all Christian prayers and also as the only devotional tool any given Christian needs in order to communicate his or her wishes effectively to God. The authority of the Paternoster prayer comes from its having been uttered by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount, specifically given to Jesus's followers for their use to pray to God, and itemizing the only requests an individual ever need make of his or her creator. This prayer also has textual authority because it is preserved in fixed form in two of the Gospels.³ *Speculum vitae* confirms this view of the pre-eminence of the Paternoster, saying 'Pis prayere suld be prayesd ay / Byfore alle þe prayers þat we say, / For it es priuyleged' (153–55) for three reasons: its 'dignite' for having originated with Jesus (157, 162–64), its 'shortnese', Jesus having chosen simple, easy words (158, 165–66), and its 'grete profyte', 'For thurgh it we ask of Godde of myght / Al þat es nedeful for þis lyf here / And for þe tothir' (159, 168–70).⁴ Of the prayers of the catechism, this prayer is a 'first among equals', the Ave Maria and the Creed having significantly different functions and sources: the Ave invokes the intercession of the Virgin and was adapted from the Salutation to the Virgin; the Creed, of which several versions survive attributed to a range of authors, itemizes the beliefs of the worshipper. These three prayers were part of the basic curriculum for every Christian, defining a primary means by which to participate in the faith, and each Christian was examined annually to ensure their knowledge of the Latin text of each of these prayers.⁵

For this reason many Paternoster expositions circulated in late medieval England, though usually a Paternoster exposition constitutes just one section of the larger spiritual manual containing it. Of Middle English works, all of the

³ Matt. 6. 9–13 and, more briefly, Luke 11. 2–4.

⁴ All quotations from *Speculum vitae* are from *Speculum vitae: A Reading Edition*, ed. by Hanna.

⁵ *John Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. by Kristensson, p. 115.

versions of the *Somme le Roi* include sections on the Paternoster, as does Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, *Cursor Mundi*, the *Mirror of Saint Edmund*, and the *Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte*. The Paternoster is the central concern of *How the Plowman Lerne His Pater Noster*. From the late fifteenth century survive *A Ryght Profytable Treatyse* and Caxton's *Quattuor Sermones*, containing Paternoster sections. A few scattered poems on the Paternoster have been edited,⁶ and over two dozen other translations, paraphrases, and expositions have not (and many are unnamed beyond being identified by their first lines). John Lydgate and John Audelay each wrote verse expositions as well.⁷ There was even a Paternoster play and a guild dedicated to its staging and performance in late medieval York.⁸ Though none of the other extant treatments of the Paternoster is as comprehensive as *Speculum vitae*, these other texts consistently emphasize the centrality of the prayer to Christian devotion.

Speculum vitae presupposes no theological knowledge of its audience and purports to teach that audience the Paternoster and all the essential ideas and practices that would enable a novice worshipper to use the prayer in his or her devotions. The poem discusses prayer in its broadest possible applications, speaking of devotional practices in which the entire Christian population might participate. To pray well, this poem suggests, worshippers must learn how to use the flawed human capacities of speaking and thinking, together with a perfectible will, to approximate divine communication. It also explores the meaning and function of prayer in Christian life and articulates the relationship between prayer (itself a broad range of practices) and language, explaining how prayer, usually but not always expressed in human language, enables humans to communicate with God.

Speculum vitae reiterates the importance of the Paternoster prayer, stating the case first on institutional grounds:

De Pater Noster first men leres,
For it es heued of alle prayers.
It es a prayere mast sufficiaunt

⁶ See Taavitsainen, 'Pater Noster: A Meditation Connected with Richard Rolle in BL, Royal MS 17.C.XVII', pp. 31–41, and Lonati, "'Ffor God Wolde þat Alle Men Ferde Weel & Were Sauid'", pp. 83–138.

⁷ Lydgate wrote two poems on the Paternoster: 'The Pater Noster Translated', and 'An Exposition of the Pater Noster' (both editorial titles). See *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by McCracken, pp. 18–20, 60–71.

⁸ Alexandra Johnston gathered together all known evidence of this play and guild and published this evidence along with her analysis in 'The Plays of the Religious Guilds of York'.

Til alle þa þat it will haunt,
 And mast siker, whareso þai ga,
 For þis lyf and þe tothir als wa.
 Wharefore ilk man þat has tane
 Þe trouth of bapty m at þe funtstane
 Þat prayere suld lere and tent
 Thurgh Halykirkes commaundement.
 * * * * *
 When first a chylde es sette to boke,
 Þe Pater Noster he sal first lere. (115–24, 128–29)

In this account, the Paternoster represents a number of firsts: it is the first prayer one learns, the first text a beginning reader experiences, and the first element of the catechism that a catechumen memorizes. Unlike any other fixed-form language (for example, the lyrics of a song, a name of a person or a place), the text of the Paternoster is imagined in this passage as the first textual object that an individual encounters, suggesting that the text of the prayer is the first text-based language that an individual might be taught in a systematic way.

Though the Paternoster prayer is performed by speaking, its importance as a prayer derives from its textual source; to use Brian Stock's words, 'A text does not cease to be structured discourse, obedient to the laws of grammar and syntax, simply because it is spoken aloud'.⁹ The form of the Paternoster prayer is fixed because of its appearance in the Bible, and the Bible vouches for the prayer's divine origins and therefore its authority. Therefore the Paternoster is likely the first text learned *because of its textual basis*, or at least the first text learned whose textual origins are crucial to the meaning and authority of the words. The prayer's complexity of meaning also derives from this textual authority; recorded as the words of God, the prayer is subject to the same extensive commentary as other biblical text. Expositions on this prayer tap into this exegetical tradition and teach about textual interpretation at the same time that they introduce the worshipper to elementary concepts of the theology. Collapsing both together gives worshippers who have learned their catechism a chance to learn processes of reading and interpretation that could very easily inform their thinking about language and textuality, regardless of whether or not these worshippers know how to read.

The poem states overtly the complexity lurking behind the deceptively simple-looking prayer. In language common to many expositions of the Paternoster, *Speculum vitae* celebrates the key paradox of the prayer:

⁹ Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, p. 13.

Pis prayere es short in worde wroght;
 It es in sentence lange in thoght.
 It es light to say prayande;
 It es sutill to vnderstande.
 Short in worde es þis prayere,
 For men it suld lyghtlyar lere
 And thurgh shortnes of it by kynde,
 Haf it þe titter in þair mynde.
 In sentence it es lange to se
 For þe mare deuocioun þerein suld be.
 * * * * *
 And alle þe sentence of it
 Vnderstande and in hert knytt. (171–80, 183–84)

In a passage that introduces and restates the paradox several times, the poem asserts the simultaneous simplicity of the prayer's language while acknowledging the complexity of the prayer's content. The poem states that it will 'speke of þe grete profyte / Of the Pater Noster' (97–98) and of the various other septenaries that 'hyng[e]' (102) or depend, on it: the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seven deadly sins (and how the Paternoster overcomes them), the seven remedial virtues, the Beatitudes or 'blissedhedes' (109) and their Rewards or 'medes' (111). But the text does not limit itself to these items; as it goes about explaining other points, it inevitably draws in other lists of theological terms, concepts, or principles. For example, in explaining the meaning of the words 'qui es', found in the invocation to the Paternoster prayer ('Pater Noster qui es in celis'), the exposition lists and explains the Ten Commandments and the Twelve Articles of Faith. Elsewhere the text describes the Works of Mercy, the seven sacraments, the active and contemplative lives, and so forth. By the time the poem has concluded, it has named the major lists of theological points, identified the components of each and their significance, and related each of these to some part of the Paternoster prayer. Each of these lists and their constituent items is therefore subsumed under some portion of the prayer; as I will illustrate shortly, *Speculum vitae* states that a worshipper is expected to navigate both the prayer's simple language and its complex meanings each time he or she prays. The language and the ideas, *Speculum vitae* argues, are inextricably linked, and the responsible worshipper strives to pray in a fashion that does justice to both the words of the prayer and its meaning.

The quotation above also introduces its listening or reading audience to the purpose of the text: to teach its audience how to interpret the language of the prayer and, as a result, to pray more effectively. To understand the prayer properly requires one first to learn how to read the words of the prayer and

understand their relationships to one another, and second to grasp the complex network of ideas and religious principles (if not all the pieces exactly in order, at least the general concept that this prayer language evokes a matrix of interpretations) that underlie its words. The text describes a Christian culture that is defined in part by knowledge of the Paternoster prayer and in part by worshippers' sensitivity to the significance of the language of that prayer.¹⁰ It also suggests that communicating with words on even a basic level entails a minimal level of skill of verbal analysis; teaching the Paternoster implicitly teaches habits of mind that readers and non-readers can use to help them interpret both religious and nonreligious language.

In effect, *Speculum vitae* proposes to teach the Paternoster prayer by showing its readers and hearers how to engage in a kind of close reading, a version of the interpretive techniques similar to that which clerics themselves are trained to apply to reading the Bible and theological writings.¹¹ The text models ways

¹⁰ Two other articles in this volume are interested in reading and thinking practices. Like *Dives and Pauper*, as discussed by Schirmer in this volume, *Speculum vitae* also wishes to teach readers how to read. However, *Dives and Pauper's* audience has more reading experience; that dialogue contrasts Dives's weaker practices with Pauper's stronger ones in order to teach more productive reading habits. By contrast, *Speculum vitae's* audience is learning the more elementary lesson of how to think in readerly terms in the first place.

Also, *Speculum vitae* seems to accomplish both of the kinds of reading of letter and spirit as discussed by Lewis in this volume; on the one hand *Speculum vitae* is very keenly interested in teaching the meaning of the letter of the prayer, as Lewis argues the Lollards preferred; but *Speculum vitae* also devotes most of its space to explaining and celebrating other interpretations that the prayer invites (though often teaching these connections through reasoning and deduction rather than through citing exegetical precedent). *Speculum vitae* appears to accomplish both of these goals, not to settle a controversy but to teach as completely as possible, including teaching both kinds of readings. Given that the poem dates to the third quarter of the fourteenth century and comes from the North, it cannot be expected to show an awareness of the Lollard controversy; indeed, *Speculum vitae's* brief, orthodox, and utterly straightforward explanation of the Eucharist suggests that the narrator needs only assert his point, not argue for it: 'men suld trowen sothfastly / Pat þis mete es þe blissed body / Of Ihesu Cryst vs to fede / With þe saul of his Godhede' (ll. 2731–34).

¹¹ The tradition of interpreting the Paternoster prayer in this elaborate way also follows an established scholarly tradition, beginning in the patristic period and continuing to the medieval. Augustine's *De sermone in monte* first establishes the relationships among the petitions of the Paternoster, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Beatitudes (which, for Augustine, numbered seven, the eighth Beatitude functioning recursively); see Augustine, *De sermone in monte*, pp. 1229–1308. Hugh of Amiens (c. 1085–1164) links the seven petitions of the Paternoster not only with the beatitudes and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but also with his model of seven orders of clergy; see Joncas, "A Skein of Sacred Sevens", pp. 85–120. Hugh of

of forming ideas about textual interpretation that are based on clerical models (at least as they are so termed by the text, as I will show below) and teaches the ability to parse language. Indeed the poem seems as interested in teaching methods of understanding and interpreting dense, religious language as it is in teaching the meaning of the Paternoster (in *Speculum vitae*, the two tasks would hardly seem separable). *Speculum vitae* claims that it promotes a message of universal interest to Christians; because *Speculum vitae* invites all those who understand English to read or hear it — and targets the lowest common denominator in that audience, those who cannot read Latin or French, and do not yet know their Paternoster — the text suggests that the ideas and the skills it teaches are not only within the reach of all Christians, but that all have an obligation to learn the principles and scholarly practices upon which it is based. To truly participate in worship is to have a fairly advanced understanding of theories of communication and textual interpretation *even if one is unable to read*.¹²

Readers and Auditors of Speculum vitae

The text of the poem addresses itself to a reading and listening audience. The introduction uses language that invites a reader — or hearer — to imagine it performed aloud to a group of auditors: 'And to 3ou, that me *herys* als swa'; 'Goode men and women, I 3ow pray, / Takys goode kep to that I *say*'; 'and while I *speke* kepe you fro slepp, / And on alle that *heres* me right / The benison of Gode on þam light' (12. 20–21, 33–35, emphasis added). In referring repeatedly to his speech and to his audience's hearing, the first-person persona (whom

St Victor's *De quinque septenis seu septenariis* renders these and other septenaries as diagrams, maps, trees, and tables of all sorts. Robert Grosseteste's confessor's manual, *Templum dei*, also connects the various septenaries with the Paternoster; see Grosseteste, *Templum dei*, ed. by Goering and Mantello.

¹² Many others have made the argument that the inability to read does not preclude an individual from participating in educated discourses or documentary culture. See, for example, Bäuml, 'Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', p. 246; Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*; and Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity'. Stock includes this idea in his argument upon introducing the concept of the textual community, saying 'interaction by word of mouth could take place as a superstructure of an agreed meaning, the textual foundation of behaviour having been entirely internalized' (Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, p. 91). However, I am proposing that the audience of *Speculum vitae*, whatever the literacy levels of its members, not only participates in the textual community of the prayer and its exposition, but also learns interpretive skills that enable its members to analyse oral and written verbal objects.

I will call the narrator) purports that this text was primarily experienced aurally by its audience — and the added command not to sleep through the lesson helps to confirm the trope that this poem was so performed. In saying ‘[I] carp of mast nedefulle thinge / That sikerest is for saule & lyfe / To man and woman, mayden & wyf’ (50–53), the narrator imagines his words will help both sexes, and he specifies that the women that will be helped are both maidens and wives; by stating that his subject will be useful to this broad audience, he allows for (but does not specifically identify) a wide range of performance venues and auditors. This passage does its utmost to position itself as a text intended for a mixed lay audience, one needing reminders of the value of hearing about spiritual matters and of staying awake through the performance.

Speculum vitae addresses readers and listeners with little or no training in theological matters, and takes on the ambitious task of teaching the members of the audience how to save their souls and govern their lives through improved prayer. The text goes on later to name the Paternoster prayer as a devotional aid that helps to remind the novice worshipper of the variety of religious and moral principles that define good living. The introduction contains a rather lengthy passage that addresses directly the ways in which the members of its stated audience are likely to experience and express language:

In ynglych tonge I sale 3ou telle,
 If 3e with me so lang wille dwelle;
 Ne latyn will I spek na wast,
 Bot in ynglych þat men vses mast,
 For why that is your kindly langage
 That 3e hase here mast of vsage,
 That cane ilk man vndirstand,
 That is born in ynglande,
 For that langage is mast shewyd
 As wele emange lerede as lewede;
 For latyn, as I trowe, cane none,
 Bot thai that hase it of scole tane.
 Some cane franche and na latyn
 That vsed has court and dwelled þerin,

Bot lerede and lewed, alde & Yonge
 Alle vndirstandys ynglych tonge.
 Tharfor, I holde it mast sekyl þan
 To shew the langage that ilk man,
 And alle, for lewede mens sake anely,
 That cane no maner of clergy,

To kene þame it ware mast need,
 For clerkys cane both se & rede
 In sere boks of haly wryte
 How þai sale lyfe, if thai luke it;
 Parfor, wille I me hally halde
 To that langage that ynglych is calde. (62–75, 80–91)

These early lines set forth the project of *Speculum vitae*: the text is written in English so that everyone may understand it, even 'some' who also know French or Latin. The text has a pastoral function, and is intended especially for those most in need of spiritual guidance, those 'lewed' who do not have clerics' books or education and yet who need training in how to live. In defining this target audience, these lines set up a number of tensions: those of language, vocation, and (implied, though not stated outright in these lines) those between ignorant, bad living and knowledgeable, good living. These tensions identify common ground among potential readers and listeners, making the text of use to the widest possible audience, at least in England. Though this text is written in English 'for lewede mens sake anely', in fact '[a]lle vndirstandys ynglych tonge', learned and 'lewede' alike; therefore the decision to compose this poem in English is an inclusive gesture (at the very least intending to be accessible to the 'lewede', while still not intending to preclude educated audiences). In describing the audience's facility with language, the poem employs verbs that refer to comprehension ('can' and 'vndirstand') as well as to 'vses',¹³ which could refer to both spoken and written use. These verbs are consistently vague about the forms they take when the members of the audience use them. It is as if the audience's literacy is immaterial to the poem; all auditors are addressed in common, regardless of their reading ability, because their status in terms of English or Latin literacy is less relevant than their access to the 'maner of clergy'. These listeners participate in the textual culture of prayer whether or not they can read.

This text also invites those with clerical training into its audience. Though this text is most urgently for those '[t]hat cane no maner of clergy', the repeated references to the universality of the English message suggests that this text could and should certainly be useful to English clerics, even though they have other texts and skills at their disposal and, one hopes, know all the contents of this English book already. The ubiquitous references to clerics, readers in general, and books appear to be strategic, suggesting that a wide range of knowledgeable audiences are tacitly envisioned by the text. Invoked regularly throughout

¹³ *MED* s.v. 'usen', def. 4.

the poem (if not directly named as an intended audience in the introduction), clerics certainly have a presence throughout the work, and are clearly welcome, if not directly targeted, members of the audience. The introduction posits the poem as the vernacular analogue to the clerics' own books, perhaps offering priests a way to teach their lay charges. The poem also uses various terms for books and clerics as part of rhymed couplets that appear, from a technical standpoint, to function as filler comments between more meaningful phrases, while appealing to the authority of these learned individuals to authorize the points being made in the text. For example, the text regularly uses the stock phrases 'As clerks in þar bukes fyndes', 'clerks can rede', 'as says þis clerkys', and 'as clerkys can pruf' to introduce or support analysis of a part of the Paternoster prayer.¹⁴

The very presence at regular intervals of these phrases defines clerical work in a limited way: clerics unpack and understand the meanings of biblical text. The repeated invocations of clerical authority named above indicate that this definition of clerical work is the model which *Speculum vitae* tries to adapt for lay, and even unlettered, use:

Whar for, þai þat vndyrstand wille
 This lesson, as thai shuld, trugh skylle;
 Thay shuld become both mek & mylde,
 And as debonair as a chylde;
 Swylk er the verray scolers right
 Of our wyse maister Gode of might,
 That of his wysdome oft þam lerys,
 And thechys þam as his awn scolers.
 Bot we may fynd many a man
 That þe naked letter anely can
 Of þis prayer that Gode wroght,
 Bot the vndirstandyng can þai not;
 Thar for, think þam it sauorles,
 For þerin fele þai no swetnes,
 Fullle lytylle deuocion hase þai
 In that prayer when þai it say;
 Bot who so vndirstandys it wele
 A sweter prayer þai it fele.

Suttelle to vndirstand is it,
 For men shuld mare sett þer wytt
 On the sentence of it namely
 Trugh grett besynes and study. (136–53, 188–91; italics added)

¹⁴ For example, see 263, 1056, 1324, 2150, 2214, 2404, *et passim*.

The quotation takes pains to explain its claims that diligent worshippers must understand the prayer and take on the responsibility of engaging in intellectual work — not that they should literally become students or dedicate themselves vocationally to the worship of God, but that they should endeavour to 'become both mek & mylde', to learn from and be taught by God, and to study the text so that they understand the spiritual meanings of this prayer. The 'scolers' who come to '[vndirstand] it [prayer] wele' are contrasted with those who know only the 'naked letter' of the prayer and have no idea how to understand it. In this context, 'naked letter' probably does not refer conventionally to the prayer's literal sense (one of the four-fold senses of scripture), but rather to mere rote memorization of the Latin words; though 'many a man' knows this 'naked letter', 'the vndirstanding can þai not; / Thar for, think þam it sauorles' — lines that suggest the worshipper, disengaged, repeats Latin prayer words that have no flavour and that he or she *literally* might not understand. Given the poem's own assertion (discussed earlier) of the remedial nature of its contents, the words 'naked letter' probably here resonate differently for their lay audience than they would for a clerical one, and appropriately so.¹⁵ This contrast between 'scolers' and 'many a man' indicates a division among all Christians, not between clerics and laity, but between those who have undertaken the task of understanding the Paternoster prayer and those who have not. 'Scolers', then, are those willing to learn, study, and think; lay worshippers and clerics alike fall into this category, and attitude, not learning, determines their status.¹⁶ In order to be good 'scolers', the laity must learn some of the basic skills of the clergy even if they are not following the same vocation. This exhortation to the text's audience to think about the prayer and its higher meaning is stated repeatedly throughout the poem,¹⁷ emphasizing the need for a worshipper to remain mentally engaged with the devotional project of praying. This text rightly acknowledges both that the contents of the work originate in scholarly discourses and that this kind of information must be shared with the 'lewed' in order for them to do their work properly — unfocused and uninformed devotions, according to the essential tenets of the text, confer no benefits (and may even cause harm,

¹⁵ This is a different function for the concept of the 'naked letter' than occurs elsewhere in this volume; see for instance the essays by Schirmer and Lewis.

¹⁶ The essay by Uselmann in this volume discusses a similar expectation in Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* and *Chastising of God's Children*, in which devout will alone suffices. In those texts, understanding the 'naked letter' of a spoken prayer is not necessary, so long as the worshipper intends to do God's will.

¹⁷ See lines 252–57, 396–401, 722–23, 796–809, *et passim*.

as we shall see below). The repeated references to clergy are not suggesting that the knowledge derived from clerics' books is really most appropriately kept in the ranks of the clergy, but rather they imply that a novice worshipper is responsible for acquiring some of the interpretive skills of the clergy. Even lay-people share with the clergy certain elementary responsibilities for understanding and executing religious duties.

This opening address also points out the potential overlap between clerical work and the devotional work that any Christian worshipper performs on a daily basis. The text describes not just clerics' individual skills and ideas, but a more general understanding about the intellectual and textual components of prayer. Teaching the 'lewed' about clerics' devotional regimen stresses the inherently universal nature of devotional practice (and even though the 'lewed' folks do not pray vocationally, they are responsible for mirroring or at least adapting some of the daily practices by learning from *Speculum vitae*). A professional religious could certainly also profit from reading and understanding a work such as this. Indeed, extant copies of *Speculum vitae* are found in a wide range of manuscript contexts, including those that were apparently copied for ownership by professional religious;¹⁸ presumably some religious did in fact avail themselves of this text. The poem's emphasis on the universality of prayer reflects not so much a democratizing intent as to remind the audience that, despite otherwise clear distinctions among occupations, an individual worshipper's shared identity as Christian entails shared devotional responsibilities as well.

Principles of Textual Analysis

Speculum vitae treats praying as an intellectual discipline that requires the worshipper to be sensitive to the grammatical and lexical features of the prayer. In teaching its audience how to pray, the text introduces worshippers to methods of engaging with and interpreting text. When discussing the Paternoster in the first section of the poem, the text shows how the prayer language and its resonances give rise to specific interpretations. The first section of the poem in particular concentrates on teaching its readers and hearers to think through the ways in which the specific words of the Paternoster relate to one another and invite richer worship of God, establishing interpretive models by working through the prayer line by line and word by word, explaining the significance of each term and its placement in the prayer. Though the term *ruminatio* is not used, the reflective processes described by the poem seem to be inspired by that model.

¹⁸ The Vernon and Simeon manuscripts contain copies of *Speculum vitae*.

Speculum vitae teaches a specific way of linking words to thoughts, and so sets out to clarify what those thoughts ought to be and how they naturally derive from or depend on the Paternoster. For this reason the text has to teach its audience a system for interpreting the prayer, one that explains both the workings of language in general and the specific workings of prayer language.¹⁹ A few examples from the text will suffice to illustrate the kinds of interpretive skills the text teaches. At the beginning of the exposition, even before discussing the meanings of the individual petitions of the Paternoster, the text explains the significance of the invocation (or, as the text calls it, the 'prouloge', l. 2299) of the prayer, 'Pater Noster qui es in celis'. From the very beginning, the poem invites its readers and listeners to divide the prayer into smaller units and to study these units both individually and together; the poem's first task after the introduction is to explain the meanings of the four 'wordes' of the invocation of the prayer, 'pater', 'noster', 'qui es', and 'in celis' (and here the 'wordes' are not only individual words, but also groupings of words or phrases of varying length — one of the recognized Middle English definitions of the word 'word').²⁰

After offering a literal, word-for-word translation of the Latin phrase,²¹ the poem goes into painstaking detail about the significance of each of the 'wordes' of the invocation, including the importance of the order of each word in the full phrase. The readers and hearers of the poem learn about the consequences of diction and syntax for the meaning of the prayer in a discussion of the first two words of the prayer. In discussing the word 'Pater', the poem shows that this word appears quite appropriately at the beginning of the prayer, signifying through its position the role of God as the beginning of all things; the poem also discusses the choice of the term 'father', which includes the sense of 'Maister, and lord' (308):

¹⁹ According to *Speculum vitae*, the language of prayer is distinct from ordinary language in that it specifically seeks to effect communication with God rather than with other humans. It has a verbal and a nonverbal component. The nonverbal component, the worshipper's will, must be aligned with the worshipper's words in order for the prayer to be effective. Communication with humans, on the other hand, does not require words and will to agree for the communication to be effective. Humans can receive a spoken message regardless of the speaker's mental agreement with the spoken words but God receives a worshipper's communication only when language and will agree.

²⁰ In fact, the word 'word' seems to be picking up variously on a host of definitions of the Middle English senses of 'word': see *MED* s.v. 'word', defs. 1a, 1d, 2a, 4e, 7a. The term refers to phrases of words used in prayer, and/or referring to translations of the Latin.

²¹ 'Pater Noster Qui Es In Celis / þese er on ynglysch, þus to neuene, / Fader ours that ys in hewyn' (259–61).

For Gode the fader his childer luffys,
 And sum tyme here he þam prufs,
 And when he sese þat þai do wrange
 He betts and chestys þam he mange
 And if þai forsayk hym for certayn,
 And sythyn wille turn to hym agayn,
 He þam resaues debonerly,
 And fayn is of that company;
 So may men knawe the goodenesse
 Þat in Gode the fader is. (324–33)

Though the text does not call attention to the Latin form of the prayer, the discussion of the prayer's original Latin syntax (privileging 'Pater' before 'noster' preserves the appropriate relationship between man and deity) reveals that the text's analysis of the prayer presupposes the Latin version. Indeed, the text does not invite questions about the appropriate language in which to pray; though the exposition is reasonably rendered into English, this English explains the Latin form of the prayer, the form that the audience is clearly expected to recite. The exposition develops its explanation of the term 'father' to illustrate the familial love and authority that it evokes, and reminds the worshippers of their duties of 'Luff, and drede, and obedience, / Seruyse, honor, and reuerence' (376–77) that they owe to such a paternal figure. Moving on to 'noster', the poem explains the significance of the plural first-person pronoun: 'In this word lyes a questione / [...] /Why a man, our fader, says ay, / And may noȝt as wele my fader say' (526–29). In response the poem responds to the hypothetical question first by explaining that Jesus is the only one entitled to say 'my father' (534–37) because he descended from God 'Trugh kynd' (536), and second by showing that:

Whar for, when þat we say þus
 Our fadir, and says gyf vs,
 We gader to vs our breder alle,
 Þat to grace of baptym Gode wold calle,
 Þat þe childer of haly kyrk bene,
 Thurgh trough of baptym þat is clene. (556–61)

The plural pronoun reminds its readers and hearers that they become God's children through baptism and that they join with the voices of their brothers and sisters in speaking this prayer; the poem then goes immediately into an explanation of the practice of the Paternoster prayer as part of the collective activities of those gathered together in church, stating the power of collective prayer over private devotions. The close reading of 'noster' not only reminds

the reader or hearer of the proper relationship between the worshipper, God, and fellow Christians, but it also includes clues that suggest ways in which devotions ought to be practised.

The methods of close reading introduced in the analysis of the invocation of the prayer are applied throughout the study of the petitions that follow, a three-thousand-line-plus segment of text that parses the terms used within each line and explains their meaning. In studying the first petition, the poem explains how the location of this petition at the beginning of the prayer stresses the primary importance of desiring to exalt God over any other human want. The study of the second petition explains the usefulness of distinguishing between the heavenly kingdom and the earthly, stating why the kingdom of God should be preferable to the kingdoms of man. The third petition is said to follow the second to suggest the ways in which the coming of the kingdom of God is brought about by God's will being done in earth and heaven. The fourth petition focuses on 'daily bread', explaining both the literal matter of daily sustenance and the spiritual matter of eucharistic sustenance. And so on — each of the petitions is explained in rather conventional ways, quite familiar to those who read devotional writings, but here the text is at pains to analyse the words of the petition and/or their order in the prayer to show how the prayer language offers up evidence of these specific conclusions. The text teaches synthetic thinking in addition to analytic thinking; for example, the conclusion suggests an overall coherence and sense of movement to the prayer (one prays first the three requests that further God's own grace, and then moves to the four petitions that help the human community become more perfect worshippers). The text, though, urges worshippers not to be overly confident and strike out on their own. Their skills are still very limited and so a worshipper should ask only for those things that promote God's desires — therefore praying only with the fixed language of the prayer is essential, so that the worshipper does not accidentally pray for something not pleasing to God. The poem, then, assumes an audience that is new to the art of interpreting text and urges this audience to, as it were, stick to the script.

Appositio, Descriptio, and *Distinctio in Speculum vitae*

Many of the principles of analysis being espoused by this text are common devices of medieval *ars grammatica*, the preceptive tradition that governed writing, speech, and the interpretation of literary works.²² Examples of a few of

²² Despite a clearer distinction between grammar and rhetoric in the classical era, medieval

the prominent techniques used in the text suffice to show the range of methods employed to teach the audience how to 'read', or interpret, the Paternoster. This particular poem seems to favour three rhetorical techniques: *appositio* (juxtaposing two images or ideas to suggest a relationship), *descriptio* (a metaphor or simile using a vivid visual image), and *distinctio* (thorough analysis of words to eliminate ambiguity of meaning).²³ Though these three techniques are never named by the writer, their rhetorical functions are made explicit by the poem's careful interpretation of the prayer, and they therefore identify the most prominent kinds of analytical and synthetic practices to which individual readers, listeners and speakers become habituated throughout the text while also equipping this text with strategies for teaching worshippers optimal ways for thinking about holy language and its methods of communicating.

One major recurring pattern in the poem is exposition that invites associational thinking, encouraging its audience to recall similar concepts that have been presented in other teachings. For example, the exposition of the first petition calls attention to the fact that this petition, as the first request of the series, has pride of place over all others because of its greater importance (an interpretation based on analysis of the order of the components of the prayer). The text goes on to claim that this primary statement functions as a baptism. Though the narrator does not explain exactly how the first petition is a baptism, the reference alone invites an audience to pursue the parallels further; just as baptism is an initiation into the faith that cleanses the worshipper, so also does the first petition of the prayer initiate both his address to God as well as his own soul's reformation. Furthermore, the sacramental nature of baptism may also find parallels in the prayer's first petition; just as baptism is a visible ceremony

ars grammatica increasingly overlapped with *ars rhetorica* and 'included not only correctness in speaking or writing (*ars recte loquendi*) but also the further study of what we would today tend to call literature (*enarratio poetarum*), or the analysis and interpretation of existing literary works' (Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, p. 136). Both of these arts drew upon a thorough and elaborate system for classifying the ornaments of speech and writing, and upon the same understandings of 'a related pair of concerns fundamental to all of these diverse "rhetorics": an elegant and orderly style and the use of language to persuade' (Payne, 'Chaucer and the Art of Rhetoric', p. 42).

²³ See Geoffrey of Vinsauf, 'The New Poetics', ed. by Kopp, p. 53, and Lanham, *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, pp. 115, 162. In the examples to come there are a host of other techniques of *enarratio poetarum* in play that the poet uses in order to explain the significance of the Paternoster; for illustrative purposes I focus on these three because of their prominent and repeated use throughout the exposition. The presence of these rhetorical features also does not preclude the presence of others; for instance, all of the examples I show here are also a result of *amplificatio*, amplification or explanation of the Paternoster prayer.

that effects a nonvisible change in the Christian's state of grace, so also can the spoken prayer be an audible sign of the worshipper's inward will (at least, if the prayer is done properly). Despite the *stated* connection between the first petition and baptism, there is no necessary *logical* connection between them that would necessitate their being seen as related in this petition. This kind of associational logic appears throughout the text; *ars grammatica* describes it as *appositio*, a method which teaches writers and speakers to connect any given point with another related point, sometimes requiring a small but understandable leap in logic to associate the two.

The second interpretive technique is *descriptio*, use of a metaphor or simile that draws upon a vivid visual description. The techniques of generating and using visual images to remember quotations, ideas, and concepts and the relationships among them were well-established ways for those with clerical training to discipline their minds and organize their memories. This text, too, trains the memories of the poem's audience to remember the ideas to which the poem exposes them. For example, in explaining the second petition, the poem states that asking for God's kingdom to come is like asking for a ray of light to penetrate the gloom of earthly life and, as happens when a shaft of light shines in a dusty room, the individual in the room can now see the filth and dust that has gathered there. Likewise, a soul in the body can see its accumulation of sins when God's kingdom comes to him or her (2489–2517). The sin of the individual, thus brought to light, can now be removed. This image transforms the petition from one that merely seeks to welcome God's kingdom to one that makes that kingdom's coming an occasion for the worshipper to improve his self-governance. The illumination brought on by the coming of God's kingdom calls the worshipper's attentions to the aspects of his own life and behaviour that he needs to attend to through spiritual housekeeping: confession.

A third prominent interpretive technique used in the poem's analysis of the prayer is *distinctio*, the thorough explanation of words and their meaning to prevent misunderstanding or ambiguity. For example, the exposition of petition five, 'Et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus', first explains the significance of 'debts' and then goes on to explain the consequences of these words when spoken aloud by a worshipper. The interpretation of the petition appears to take some liberties with the Latin prayer petition, though the poem translates the Latin fairly accurately:

[...] we aske of our fader dere
 For gyfnes, and says on þis manere:
 Et Dimitte Nobis Debita Nostra
 Sicut Et Nos Dimitimus Debitoribus Nostris;

In þis askyn þat we her say,
 Our fadir of heuene þus we pray
 Þat he wille for gyf vs sone
 Alle our mysdedys þat we haue done,
 As we for gyf with good wille
 Tylle þam þat has done vs ille;
 * * * * *
 Fader our dettys þu for gyf vs
 As we alle detts for gyf clene
 Tylle alle þei þat our dettours bene. (2890–99, 2903–06)

This translation takes the unusual step of offering two different versions of the petition in English, whereas the other translations offer a translation only once. Both translations are rather expansive, in part perhaps to fit the translation to the rhyme scheme, but in part as well to draw out the various ways that ‘debita’ and ‘debitoribus’ can be interpreted — they are not only ‘detts’, as the second translation indicates, but also the ‘mysdedys’ of the worshipper and the undifferentiated harms that others may have visited upon him or her. The translation thus makes clear that debts can be both things owed and deeds done, and the petition is therefore asking for forgiveness for both.

The poem’s analysis of the fifth petition continues on to show the consequences of prayer, detailing in particular how prayer words when spoken have a power independent of the intent that motivated the worshipper to speak them. The poem goes on to explain that the primary focus of the fifth petition is parallel forgiveness: God will treat the worshipper exactly as the worshipper treats others, the poem states, and therefore the worshipper is likely to do himself great harm if he prays these words without having fully forgiven those indebted to him. Therefore the worshipper must be cautioned about the consequences of failing to forgive others before taking on this particular petition, since one who prays this petition while harbouring any ill-will whatsoever against others ‘prays again hym seluen’ (2954). *Speculum vitae* cautions its audience that the petition’s words have a very specific meaning, and that reciting them entails a divine response whether or not the specific consequences are intended by the speaker. The fact that this petition, when spoken, automatically generates a divine response would seem at odds with the common assertion found in prayer guides that the words have no meaning if the intent of the worshipper is not aligned to conform to the language. However, here the prayer takes on a sort of contractual quality, gaining for the worshipper only so much forgiveness as he or she can muster for those around him or her. In order for the worshipper to gain the maximum benefit from this prayer, he or she needs not only to

understand what the language means, but also what specific operation (in this case, forgiveness of others) he or she must perform in order to align his or her will with the prayer words most positively and productively.

The exposition therefore draws a distinction between the worshipper's assumed intention — to be forgiven for his own debts of sin — and the words he uses to articulate his intention, compelling the worshipper to acknowledge that being forgiven requires the ability to forgive. Indeed, the exposition states that the results of praying the petition vary according to the ability of the worshipper to forgive. The petition can bring about blessings or curses. In this respect the prayer petition is very like a charm, whose performative quality causes the utterance of its words to bring about spiritual consequences, whether or not the speaker understands those words; praying intentionally, with the worshipper's will aligned with the words, keeps the worshipper in control of the prayer and its consequences. Either way the words have tremendous power, and this example urges the worshipper to use these words warily, conscious of both the meaning of the petition and the conditions that must be met in order for the words to have their desired effect.²⁴ This emphasis on the meanings of the terms and of the consequences, intended and unintended, that can arise from them, encourages the worshipper to be aware always of the specific meanings and potential results of using any given language.

These examples of interpretive models offer some detail about how the text teaches reading strategies that could be applied more broadly than just to the Paternoster prayer. Each new expository passage contains mini-lessons in rhetoric, semantics, and performativity, all without being called such. If indeed this text is reasonably intended to have been read and heard by the widest possible audience, as the introduction of the work implies and as the subject matter too presupposes, and if the lessons contained therein for the interpretation of the prayer are imagined as a kind of beginner's curriculum on the recitation and interpretation of the Paternoster prayer, then the strategies contained within the poem act as an introduction to ways in which to read and understand spoken and written language in general.

We know that being educated in late medieval England usually entailed knowing how to interpret text. According to James J. Murphy:

²⁴ Uselmann also comments on how Nicholas Love and *Chastising of God's Children* both suggest that the Paternoster and liturgical prayer (respectively) have something akin to sacramental power that can operate in some fashion depending on the intention of the worshipper; see the essay by Uselmann in this volume.

A mature educated man of, say, the fourteenth century, would have heard literally thousands of sermons, read (or even heard) hundreds of letters written to the format of the *ars dictaminis*, heard (or possibly read) an untold number of verse compositions affected by the advice of teachers of the *ars poetriaie*, listened in church over a lifetime to a liturgy informed for centuries by rhetorical and rhythmical theories, with his understanding of the Scripture itself affected by punctuational decisions based on the commentators' concern for audience effect. His elementary education, whether he realized it or not, was an amalgam of grammatical and rhetorical processes.²⁵

Less educated individuals might also have had some level of understanding of these grammatical and rhetorical processes as well. These worshippers learn about these rhetorical devices in similar ways to that of the mature educated man in the above example; they too hear thousands of sermons over the course of a lifetime, listen to a wide range of verse compositions (which may or may not have been crafted according to the precepts of *ars poetriaie*). *Speculum vitae* offers evidence, though, that this kind of education may have taken place in other ways in addition to regular exposure to the products of formal training. The poem foregrounds the ways in which catechetical education might entail a basic level of training in the interpretation of speech and text. One of the poem's basic assumptions is that it is possible and desirable to teach to *everyone*, even the illiterate, the skills of textual interpretation; these skills do not just pertain to well-trained, advanced thinkers. This is not a text that insists simply on inviting its readers to memorize lists of things, but rather it leads them through the same reasoning processes that teach clerics to see relationships between prayer and every item of the faith. This text therefore models the processes of thinking through the logical, imagistic, theological, and metaphorical connections between the language of the Paternoster prayer and that of other component ideas within the religion. The text says repeatedly that the way to pray correctly is to treat prayer like study, and then models what that study looks like, to the point of emphasizing at every turn that the worshipper needs to use 'wytt' (l. 189 et passim), 'toght' (l. 396 et passim), 'vndirstandynge' (l. 398 et passim), 'imagynyng' (l. 399 et passim), and other terms for intellectual engagement. Its emphasis on thinking and intellect shows that a worshipper need not be literate to have literary critical skills, and one need not learn how to read before learning how to interpret text.

Finally, the text positions itself as an introduction not only to the study of worshipful communication, but also to the study of language in general. The

²⁵ Murphy, *Medieval Eloquence*, p. xi.

range of interpretive techniques found in the poem reminds its audience of the power of language and of the necessity of all individuals, whether cloistered and highly trained or worldly and 'lewed', to think carefully about words and their applications. It therefore seems possible that those who were taught the Paternoster in this way may have thought not only about prayer, but also text and language generally, through this sort of filter — for the messages that are being taught here are widely applicable outside of a devotional context. Though the text itself does not invite or authorize readers and hearers to apply these strategies to other texts (whether the Bible, or other theological texts, or non-religious texts), nevertheless the poem teaches readers and hearers how to take apart and understand the language they speak. Furthermore, the text teaches its audience to be knowledgeable about rhetorical uses of language within a culture in which the power of words is exercised in a variety of ways: spiritually through charms and incantations, prayers and invocations to the divine; legally through vows and oaths, wills and contracts; socially through spoken and written narratives, broadsides, and everyday conversation (for example). By teaching the systematic study of a textual object, the text teaches to its audience a method for interpreting and using language that occurs in a variety of contexts, not just a devotional one. These points above suggest that the idea of textual analysis taught by this text might have been a method of approaching text and language (the Paternoster in particular, but by extension other kinds of textual language) that became an influential model for Middle English reading and also for thinking about text more broadly.

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REPRESENTING READING IN *DIVES AND PAUPER*

Elizabeth Schirmer

Prologue

Dives and Pauper, an ambitious English commentary on the Ten Commandments dating to the first decade of the fifteenth century, sets out to provide the lay reader with all the knowledge necessary to gain salvation.¹ While perhaps only loosely described as a ‘devotional’ text, this compendious treatise–dialogue is deeply concerned with reading. Like many Middle English religious texts, *Dives and Pauper* undertakes the religious instruction of its lay audience by educating them as readers, offering not only specific interpretations of texts and signs, but also strategies for engaging with texts and other signifying systems. As a dialogue, moreover, *Dives* represents the lessons in reading that it simultaneously conducts. It takes the form of a pedagogical encounter between the poor teacher, Pauper, whose clerical status is left ambiguous, and the wealthy layman, Dives, who brings to the proceedings a troublesome array of ideas and strategies of his own. The often-lively interactions between them illuminate the complex dynamics of lay religious education around the turn of the fifteenth century in England.

¹ I cite parenthetically throughout, by volume, part, and page number, from *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by Barnum. Barnum’s dating of c. 1404–10 (see I, p. ix, II, pp. xvii–xxxi) has not been challenged, to my knowledge.

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Dives, like Langland's Will, has just enough knowledge to get himself into trouble, and he does not prove a docile student. He cites the Bible in defence of his own positions and frequently challenges Pauper's readings in a 'lewyd' imitation of scholastic *disputatio*. It is Dives, moreover, who directs the proceedings, which respond to his questions and do not move forward until he is persuaded by Pauper's 'skills'. While Pauper's is the voice of spiritual and doctrinal authority, discursive agency thus rests with his lay interlocutor. Nor can Pauper, who never explicitly claims clerical status, pull rank: his arguments must stand on their own merits.

Barnum tends to assume that Pauper, like the text's author, is a Franciscan friar; but in the A version of the 'Holy Poverty' prologue Pauper himself claims, 'I woot neuer in qhat degree I am', but only that in 'staat [...] I am a beggere nedy and pore' (I, 1.53).² Pauper's ambiguous status reflects, and reflects upon, his changing pedagogical environment. No longer was lay religious instruction confined to the pulpit and the confessional; boundaries between cleric and lay, teacher and student, were being renegotiated, as lay people in the 'actif lijf' took an increasingly active role in their own spiritual development.³ The proliferation of Middle English religious writing, especially over the course of the last quarter or so of the fourteenth century, provided laypeople of means with a variety of readerly skills and a new hermeneutic confidence, offering them a new kind of agency *as readers* in their own salvation.⁴ But the education offered by these texts was unsystematic and often confusing. Dives, I propose, embodies the effects of this relatively haphazard vernacular tradition. His problem is not so much a lack of knowledge as an ill-placed confidence in the information and skills he does possess. Pauper's task is more often than not to *re-educate* Dives as a reader, moving him from literal to spiritual interpretations and from simple, singular readings to complex, multiple understandings.

² In the more polemical B Version of the Prologue Pauper identifies himself simply as a 'pore caityf' — a term that could, to suspicious ears, have lollard resonances. The B Version's Pauper would thus seem to inhabit the murky territory between Wycliffite and reformist Franciscan discourses, his caginess perhaps ensuring that it remain murky. See Clopper, 'Franciscans, Lollards and Reform'; also Clopper, *Songes of Rechelesnesse*.

³ For two compelling studies of this phenomenon see Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience*, and Zieman, *Singing the New Song*.

⁴ Ample evidence that Middle English religious writers taught reading as a primary means of spiritual progress is provided by the essays in this section; see, e.g., Kathryn Vulić's account in this volume of the *Speculum vitae*, a long Middle English commentary on the Paternoster, as both a 'theological primer' and a teacher of 'interpretive models'.

Pauper undertakes this task, moreover, at a time when questions of lay religious pedagogy were being reframed by the lollard controversy, which was gaining urgency under the usurping Lancastrian regime.⁵ Dated to a within a few years of Archbishop Arundel's anti-lollard *Constitutions* of 1409,⁶ *Dives and Pauper* reflects an awareness of the central terms and strategies of the lollard controversy but refuses to take sides. Barnum finds the work to be 'something between' an apology for the clergy and a Wycliffite call for reform (I, 1.x; see also II, xli, lxvi); Anne Hudson similarly made *Dives* exemplary of the 'grey area' between lollard and anti-lollard territories.⁷ I am interested here in how the text identifies and charts Hudson's 'grey area,' and to what pedagogical ends. Rather than simply occupying a neutral space between two opposing territories, lollard and anti-lollard, I find *Dives and Pauper* to be deliberately engaged with the textual dynamics and pedagogical consequences of the controversy as a whole. Over the course of the text, through his pedagogical interactions with Dives, Pauper gradually learns to walk a careful *via media* between increasingly polarized lollard and anti-lollard positions. Rejecting Wycliffite ecclesiology while advocating vernacular biblicism, *Dives and Pauper* is most concerned that the lollard controversy *per se* not be allowed to impoverish the terms and methods of vernacular religious pedagogy.

At a key moment early in the 'Holy Poverty' prologue to *Dives and Pauper*, Dives expresses frustration with his earlier religious education. When Pauper draws a connection between poverty and preaching, Dives remembers a man with whom he spoke twenty years ago — that is, probably in the mid-1380s — who was 'a man of þin staat þat was wol lyk þe in speche and persone, but he spak of so hey perfeccioun, as þu now begynnyst to doon, þat into þis day I coude neuer atteyne þerto. And he tolde me the same tale of þat 3onge man

⁵ See Catto, 'Religious Change under Henry V'; also Strohm, 'Counterfeiters, Lollards, and Lancastrian Unease'.

⁶ For two opposed theories regarding the impact of Arundel's legislation on Middle English religious writing, see Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', who argues that the *Constitutions* functioned effectively as censorship, and Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*, pp. 397–401, who argues that their actual impact was 'relatively minimal'. For several recent efforts to rethink the significance of the *Constitutions*, see *After Arundel*, ed. by Gillespie and Ghosh.

⁷ See especially Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, pp. 417–29; for a more recent elaboration of the concept see Havens, 'Shading the Grey Area'. The 'Longleat sermons', by the same author as *Dives and Pauper*, are openly critical of the *Constitutions*, particularly of the restrictions placed by Arundel's legislation on preaching and vernacular Bible transmission, but like *Dives* they retain a perfectly orthodox 'sacerdotal theology': see Hudson and Spencer, 'Old Author, New Work', pp. 226–29.

[who finds it too difficult to sell all he has and give it to the poor, Luke 18. 18] þat þu teldyst me now' (I, 1.65). We never learn who this earlier teacher was — a friar? Piers Plowman? a lollard? — only that he left Dives perplexed and frustrated, insisting on standards of perfection to which Dives has proved unequal. Dives, then, is not just imperfectly educated; he is disillusioned. Fourteenth-century vernacular theology, for all its diversity, has failed to provide him with an attainable model of Christian life and teaching, and we get the sense that he expects no better of Pauper, who strikes Dives as a carbon copy of his earlier teacher.

Despite these superficial resemblances, however, the text in fact uses this moment to establish important distinctions between fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century pedagogies. *Dives and Pauper* responds to the concerns voiced by its lay student-figure by, first, reinstating blurred boundaries between two 'maner of perfeccioun' [kinds of perfection], 'lesse' and 'more' (I, 1.66) — without, importantly, identifying them with institutional categories (e.g., lay and cleric).⁸ Those who, like Dives, seek the 'lesse perfeccioun' are required only to follow the commandments of God. This, it seems, should be reassuring to Dives, given the concerns he has expressed. But it comes with pedagogical challenges of its own. Pauper must now provide Dives with an exhaustive guide to the readerly objects and strategies necessary to his less perfect 'staat' — a task whose record occupies two full volumes in the EETS series, not counting a third volume of notes that took years to produce. If Pauper's fifteenth-century pedagogy relaxes the standards of spiritual perfection required of the student, then, it places a greater burden of comprehensiveness on the teacher, who is now required both to define and to provide everything necessary to his student's salvation.

The movement of Pauper's voluminous lessons in reading is twofold. On the one hand, he redirects Dives from literal to spiritual levels of meaning — the primary movement of Christian hermeneutics, and one recently complicated by Wycliffite brands of literalism.⁹ At the same time, Pauper responds to Dives's

⁸ Anna Lewis, in her essay on lollard models of biblical reading in this volume, notes the challenge they posed to a 'traditional "model of pedagogy" which placed a "symbolic boundary" between "simple people" who understand scripture at a literal level and the clergy or *literati*'; see Lewis, p. 38, citing Dove, *The First English Bible*, p. 380. *Dives and Pauper*, I suggest here, begins by restoring (a version of) this traditional boundary.

⁹ Cf. Lewis's account in this volume of Wycliffite 'reclamations' of the traditional Pauline distinction between letter and spirit, which formed the basis of medieval hermeneutics but remained itself open to reinterpretation. For a thorough and invaluable discussion of Wyclif's own distinctive biblical literalism and its complexities, see Minnis, "Authorial Intention".

singular readings with multiple alternatives, resisting the shared tendency of polemicists on both sides of the lollard controversy to insist each on their own, singular solution. We can see this double movement — both from literal to spiritual, and from singular to multiple readings — emerge in the prologue's initial debate over the nature of poverty. In the opening sequence of the text, Pauper shifts the topic of discussion from his own literal poverty to the poverty of spirit required of all Christians, citing *Beati pauperes spiritu* (I, 1.56). He then introduces a *distinctio* between different kinds of literal poverty, wilful and not, patient and not. Dives objects with '3et contra te' — a favourite pseudo-academic move of his, as it was of Langland's Will before him — and cites Ecclesiastes, in Latin and English. Pauper condemns Dives's translation as 'fals Englysh and nought conuenyent' (I, 1.60). This exchange does not merely establish Pauper's superior academic skills, or even Dives's hubris in applying the ones he has picked up from earlier teaching; it also establishes a basic pedagogical pattern in which Dives cites the Bible in support of a literal, unitary reading, to be corrected by Pauper through multiple recourses to philology, allegory, and *distinctio*. Proper reading is not only a matter of moving from letter to spirit, signifier to signified; reading and signification are properly multiple, operating on several levels at once, and capable of opening out onto a potentially infinite field of meaning.¹⁰

The Ten Commandments, in Pauper's exposition, are emblematic of this multiplicity of signifying relationships. Each commandment establishes specific standards of reading and signifying; each also participates in larger signifying systems linking morality, theology, and devotion.¹¹ As Pauper puts it, they are 'so knyht togedere & of so gret accord þat hosio trespas in on he trespasyth in alle' (I, 2.28); the need for all ten derives from our own failures and limitations, our need to be educated constantly in the salvific arts of reading and signification. When Dives asks about their conventional division into two tables — one of the first three commandments, governing our relationship with God, and the second of the remaining seven, regarding our relationships with

¹⁰ This is itself, of course, as much a commonplace of traditional medieval exegesis as the movement from letter to spirit; what I am suggesting is that *Dives and Pauper* represents the lollard controversy as effectively discouraging the practice of 'reading multiply' (so to speak) in vernacular pedagogical contexts. It is this practice that *Dives* is most concerned to preserve and protect for English readers and their teachers.

¹¹ Cf. the special status of the *Pater noster* in the *Speculum vitae*, the most 'comprehensive' of Middle English commentaries on that foundational prayer — and a text that, in Vulić's reading in this volume, similarly seeks to teach its vernacular readers both to parse and to synthesize as well as to consider multiple levels of meaning simultaneously; Vulić, p. 65.

each other — Pauper explains that the commandments as a whole are ‘comprehendyt and belokyn’ in the two gospel precepts of charity, with each precept ‘comprehending’ one table (I, 1.298). Focusing on the first precept of charity, Pauper explains that the gospel mandate to love God with heart, soul, and mind stands in signifying relationship to the first three commandments, as well as to the three persons of the Trinity. Just as the members of the Trinity ‘accord’ in a single Godhead, so our speech, our ‘thoughts inward’, and our works must accord each with the other in proper worship and action. These three faculties are linked further to Bernard’s injunction to love God *dulciter, prudenter, fortiter*, that is, ‘swetelyche’, ‘wyselyche’, and ‘myzteliyche’ (I, 1.301). This layering of Trinitarian, moral, and contemplative readings, while nowhere original in its doctrine, is typical of Pauper’s methodology throughout. Through it, *Dives and Pauper* insists that reading can never be reduced to singular objects, strategies, or interpretations. Effective religious pedagogy requires recourse to as many readerly objects and methods as possible.

It is this multiplicity and diversity of reading strategies that is threatened by the controversy over lollardy. Each side in the lollard controversy (as I have argued elsewhere) sought to canonize a singular model of reading.¹² Following the paradigm-setting work of Nicholas Watson, many scholars are accustomed to thinking of the anti-lollard project as an effort to limit the reading material available to laypeople.¹³ But the lollards were also troubled by (what appeared to them to be) a general multiplying of signs, signifying systems, and models of reading. While laypeople were meditating on crucifixes and engaging in ever-more-complex acts of penitential self-reading, preachers were dividing

¹² This is not to say that either side rejected the common medieval practice of adducing multiple meanings of, say, a single biblical passage. Rather, each side worked to delineate and authorize a single model of engaging with texts as uniquely authoritative or appropriate for lay readers. For a fuller elaboration of this argument, see my ‘Canon Wars and Outlier Manuscripts’.

¹³ The *locus classicus* for this argument is Watson, ‘Censorship and Cultural Change’. Seeing the anti-lollard establishment as censors implies a view of the lollards themselves as ‘democratizers’ — a view most persuasively articulated by Copeland, in *Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent*. But this binary has recently been challenged productively on several fronts. Some critics emphasize the ‘conservative’ or ‘fundamentalist’ impulses of the lollard movement; see, e.g., Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*, pp. 209 and 391. Others have noted the innovative vernacular theologies developed by insistently orthodox writers such as Nicholas Love. Susan Uselmann’s essay in this volume, notably, argues that Love’s *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* develops vernacular models of ‘meditative humility’, both liturgical and theological, that are at least as ‘rigorous and demanding’ as their Latin monastic antecedents; see Uselmann, pp. 188]. Not unlike Uselmann, I am interested in the way that the lollard controversy, for all its polarizing rhetoric, actually proved generative of new vernacular religious pedagogies.

and subdividing texts and littering their sermons with narrative exempla. The doctrine of transubstantiation, by radically divorcing accident from substance, had wrenched apart sign and signified, the bread that is seen and the body that is received, in a way that, to the Wycliffite mind, did fundamental damage to the lines of communication between human and divine. The lollards found this proliferation itself disturbing, a symptom of the fetishizing of the sign that Wyclif himself had attacked.¹⁴ In response, as we shall see in more detail below, they developed a distinctive sign theory grounded in the singular nature of true signs and right reading. Their opponents, as we have increasingly come to understand (again *pace* Watson's paradigm), were themselves just as concerned to educate as to limit lay reading, often poaching Wycliffite strategies to reinforce orthodox ecclesiology and develop anti-lollard models of reading.¹⁵

Like the lollards and also their opponents, *Dives and Pauper* recognizes the pedagogical challenges posed by the proliferation of reading models in English. *Dives* embodies those challenges, and they are, I shall argue, never fully resolved. But unlike the main combatants in the controversy proper, *Dives and Pauper* refuses to subscribe to any singular solution. Instead, it seeks to preserve the multiplicity of reading models available in English, protecting the diversity of the inherited tradition from the lollard controversy. The two sections of this essay that follow consider the representation of reading in the main text of *Dives and Pauper*: both in the pedagogical dynamics that unfold between its two titular interlocutors, and also in *Pauper's* unpacking throughout the text of multiple signifying relationships — between text and meaning, letter and spirit, inward truth and outward sign, sacrament and grace, representation and understanding, and, ultimately, human and divine. *Pauper's* reading lessons integrate interpretive reading, by which the meaning of a text or a sign is understood, and what I call formative reading, by which the reader brings his own heart, mind, and behaviour into accord with the text s/he reads.¹⁶ To read

¹⁴ The rhetoric of Wyclif and of his vernacular followers is full of derogatory references to the 'generation of adulterers' that 'seeks after signs' (Matthew 16. 4). See Wyclif's *De veritate sacrae scripturae*, ed. by Levy, esp. pp. 102 and 164; also Wyclif, *Select English Works*, ed. by Arnold, III, esp. pp. 245 and 430 (it is no longer common to attribute these vernacular works to Wyclif himself).

¹⁵ See Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, pp. 148, 160–61; also my 'Canon Wars and Outlier Manuscripts', pp. 14–16. Uselmann, in this volume, similarly finds in Love's *Mirror* and in its strikingly uniform manuscript tradition a deliberate 'template for standardizing private devotional reading' — though she is less apt than I to characterize this standardizing program as anti-lollard; see Uselmann, p. 173.

¹⁶ These categories, as I define them, are roughly parallel but not identical to the tradi-

the divine in *Dives and Pauper*, as in many vernacular religious texts from the period, is to rewrite the self — and so to become, ultimately, an object of divine reading at the Last Judgement, when Christ will read our doom in the ‘tales and lytteris’ of our conscience (I, 2.149). Lay readers must be given as many means as possible to enter into accord or ‘onhed’ with the divine.

The First Table

The commentary on the first table of commandments — that is, we recall, on the first three commandments, concerning our relationship with God — takes up nearly half of *Dives and Pauper*. Here the text addresses Wycliffite models of reading, rejecting the singular sign theory that underpins lollard objections to images, oaths, and miracles. But it is not enough, Pauper gradually realizes, to replace a narrowly lollard perspective with an equally narrow anti-lollard one. Rather than simply rejecting lollardy, *Dives and Pauper* and its teacher-figure increasingly emphasize basic pastoral and theological principles obscured or occluded by the lollard controversy. Under the first table, those principles centre on questions of proper worship: in reading the divine through images; in signifying the self in relation to God through oaths; and in interpreting the will of God by the laws of the Old Testament. As he corrects Dives’s lollard-like readings in this first half of the text, Pauper develops a pedagogy based on the multiplicity of true signs and right reading.

The text proper opens with a long discussion of images, a topic that, while it did not much exercise Wyclif, was by now used as a litmus test for lollardy.¹⁷ Here Dives voices the knee-jerk iconoclasm that had become a stereotype of lollard views (and would continue to be used by inquisitors to identify heretics well into fifteenth century): ‘Qherof seruyn þese ymagys?’ he demands, ‘I wolde þey weren brent euerychon’ (I, 1.82). The topic of images was a primary extramural site of the development of Wycliffite sign theories. As Margaret Aston reminds us, lollards took a range of positions on images, from cautious

tional categories of hermeneutics (or exegesis) and *lectio divina*, discussed in the Introduction to this volume.

¹⁷ For a classic account of the role of images in the lollard controversy, see Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, esp. Chapter 5, ‘Lollards and Images’, pp. 135–92. For an excellent recent discussion, see Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*. Fiona Somerset’s reconsideration of lollard positions on images (*inter alia*), which rejects the notion of any ‘litmus test for lollardy’, unfortunately appeared too late for full consideration here; Somerset, *Feeling Like Saints*, p. 12.

recognition of their value as 'signs or tokens' to wholesale iconoclasm.¹⁸ They generally agreed, however, that images signify in the same way as texts. Hence, as one lollard treatise puts it, to cover a crucifix in jewels and finery is no different from writing a book claiming that Christ hung lavishly dressed upon the cross at Calvary.¹⁹ This argument pushes to its logical extreme the much-quoted Gregorian maxim that images are the books of the laity.²⁰ While Aston has argued that the lollards launched a 'frontal' attack on the traditional notion of images of laypeople's books,²¹ I find many lollards instead adapting the maxim to their singular sign theory. In one treatise, dubbed by Hudson 'not particularly moderate' in its opinions, improper worship treats images 'as Gods' or 'as resonable creatures', while proper worship uses them 'as clerkis don her bokis'.²² Even the most iconoclastic Wycliffites tend to condemn images as 'bok[es] of errour to the lewed puple', retaining the basic equation between book and image.²³ Many lollards, moreover, expand the Gregorian connection between books and images to include people as signs. It is easy to find a Wycliffite text rejecting pilgrimage to the 'dead books' of saints' images in favour of 'almes to quicke ymages of god, þat ben pore folc'.²⁴ This expansion of the maxim can

¹⁸ See Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 135–92, esp. pp. 165–74.

¹⁹ 'And siþ þes ymagis ben bokis of lewid men to sture þem on þe mynde of Cristis Passion, and techen by her peyntur, veyn glorie þat is hangid on hem [is] an opyn errour azenys Cristis gospel. Ðei ben worþe to be brent or exilid, as bokis shulden be 3if þei maden mencion and tau3ten þat Crist was neyld on þe crosse wiþ þus myche gold and siluer and precious clopis' (from a lollard treatise on 'Images and Pilgrimages', in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Hudson, pp. 83–84). Gayk also cites this passage, in part to argue that while the Wycliffites saw images and texts as 'analogous signs', they believed images to be less transparent and more in need of clarifying interpretation; see Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, pp. 19–23.

²⁰ Aston translates the relevant passage, from Gregory's *Registrum epistolarium*: 'It is one thing to worship a picture, another to learn from the story depicted what should be worshipped. For what a book (*scriptura*) is to those who read, a picture (*pictura*) presents to the uneducated who observe it, since in it the unlearned see what they ought to follow, and in it those who know no letters can read. Hence a picture serves as reading specifically for the people' (Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, p. 114). Gayk, in *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, also traces the use of this maxim in fifteenth-century 'reformist aesthetics'.

²¹ Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, p. 130.

²² From 'Sixteen Points', in Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, p. 23.

²³ From 'Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards', in Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, p. 27.

²⁴ From 'Images and Pilgrimages', in Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, p. 85.

also have a pedagogical resonance. The Wycliffite priest William Thorpe, whose *Testimony* narrates an interrogation by Arundel roughly contemporary with the writing of *Dives and Pauper*, rewrites the maxim to emphasize the exemplary function of the clergy, replacing images with the lives and teaching of priests: ‘holi lyuyng, and trewe and busy techynge of preestes,’ he argues, should be ‘sufficient bokis and kalenders to knowe God bi and his sentis.’²⁵

By the time *Dives and Pauper* was written, then, the ‘pedagogical’ defence of images as books of the laity had been variously appropriated and transformed by Wycliffite writers in the service of their own, singular sign theory, collapsing distinctions between different kinds of signs.²⁶ *Dives and Pauper*, in turn, uses the maxim creatively to *resist* Wycliffite sign theories, deploying it in a variety of different ways, in dialogue with both ‘affective’ defences of imagery and the traditional distinction between *latrīa* and *dulīa*, to emphasize the multiplicity of signifying relationships. Here, in the opening section of the text proper, Pauper’s response to Dives’s iconophobia exposes and corrects the assumptions behind lollard reading models, and in particular their insistent singularity.²⁷ When Dives equates and rejects all religious images, Pauper defends them by invoking the Gregorian maxim as one model of reading among many. Images, he asserts, serve both an affective purpose (they ‘steryn mannys afecioun and his herte to deuocioun’) and an instructional one (as a ‘tokene and a book to þe lewyd peple, þat þey moun redyn in ymagerye and peynture þat clerkys redyn in boke’) (I, 1.82). When Dives then picks up on Pauper’s Gregorian language and asks for lessons in reading — ‘How schulyn I rede in þe book of peynture and of ymagerye?’ (I, 1.83) — Pauper’s response is again twofold: first reading the crucifix as a remedy to sin and then as an invitation to affective union with Christ (see I, 1.85). Dives, however, while recognizing his need for readerly instruction, remains mired in singular thinking. He insists that worship is worship, and so kneeling before a crucifix is sin. This provides the perfect opportunity for Pauper to debunk the singular understanding that can only too easily infect the vernacular. For the single English word ‘worship,’ he explains, ‘is referryd to

²⁵ *Two Wycliffite Texts*, ed. by Hudson, p. 58.

²⁶ Other Middle English religious writers also deployed the maxim to various purposes, including anti-lollard ones; see Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 179 and 181–82 (on Walter Hilton and Reginald Pecock), and Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, pp. 155–86 (on Pecock).

²⁷ Hudson notes that the discussion of images in *Dives and Pauper* uses ‘many of the same arguments found as in Lollard texts [...] but the vocabulary in general is markedly different’ (Hudson, *Lollards and their Books*, p. 180 n. 53).

dyuerse thynggys', a fact which 'blyndȝyt mechil folk in her redyngge [...] And so for lewydnesse þey ben deseyuyd and wurshepyn creaturys as God hymself' (I, 1.89). In the translation from Latin to the vernacular, from clerical to popular discourse, multiple meanings are reduced to a single sense that, in turn, leads the unwary into idolatry or heresy.²⁸

Such multiplicity, it soon emerges, presents pedagogical challenges of its own. Pauper's second deployment of the Gregorian maxim in defence of religious images suggests the limitations as well as the strengths of his developing vernacular pedagogy. Here Pauper offers the analogy of a priest kissing his book and reverencing the crucifix during the Mass. In this analogy, the priest's book functions *as an image*, an object of proper devotional worship, participating in a liturgical ritual that is itself image-like, 'a special mende making of Cristys Passion' (I, 1.86). This is a turning point in the debate, for better and for worse. In a moment of victory for his teacher, Dives at last grasps that images are 'a book *and a tokene* to þe lewyd peple' (I, 1.90) [my emphasis] — a crucial expansion of the maxim which allows for various modes of signification, not just those proper to texts. Dives then makes a second request for reading lessons that acknowledges this multiplicity: 'teche me ȝet a lytyl betere to knowe þis tokene and to redyn þis book' (I, 1.91). The lessons that ensue, however, end equivocally. For Pauper is now faced with the daunting task of explaining all of the different ways in which different images signify. Not surprisingly, this proves impossible to accomplish in full, and the student, possessed of an increasingly wide array of readerly strategies, can step in at any time and derail the process.

Pauper begins gamely by distinguishing 'proper' elements in the imagery of saints, such as Mary's lily or Catherine's wheel, from 'common' ones — mantles betokening virtue, halos for bliss in heaven, and so forth. Some elements of saintly imagery can only be read figuratively, such as their bare feet, signifying innocence or penance, and their gay clothing, betokening their bliss in heaven. Dives persists stubbornly in a literal reading, which soon emerges as a trap. Why, he demands, are saints' feet silver? Pauper, by now predictably, resists this reductive literalism (images = saints) by offering two readings that emphasize the difference between the sign and its referent, one affective (silver inspires devotion) and one practical (it does not wear away with much kiss-

²⁸ We might note that Pauper has recourse in this single long passage to all three traditional defences of imagery outlined by Gayk: Gregory's 'pedagogical' maxim, the Eastern distinction between *latría* and *dulia*, and the more recent 'affective defense' (which argues, following Durandus, that images move the emotions more than writing, and so should be shown more reverence); see Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, pp. 1–5.

ing). Dives, however, has learned too well the lesson that signs can signify in more than one way. '3a, 3a', he taunts, 'Sey now as þu seydyt onys' — namely, that the feet betoken the affections, and so the silver-footed images show that the love and affection of the clergy are set in gold and silver.²⁹ Similarly the finery that adorns the statues is 'but a tollyng of more offryng and a tokene to þe lewyd peple qhere þey shullen offryn and qhat' (I, 1.101). Pauper's multiple reading lessons have paved the way for this anticlerical critique — one calculated, moreover, to appeal to a poor preacher like Pauper himself. And appeal it does. The next time Dives asks 'qhy men been so besy to doon þe peple wurshepyn ymagys' (I, 1.107), Pauper does not offer distinctions between different kinds of worship; instead he opines that 'Couetyse of men of holy churche and lewydnesse bothe of hem and of þe peple been cause of sucche ydolatrie' (I, 1.107). Dives's subversive reading of saints' feet has led Pauper, in turn, to articulate an anticlericalism that *could* be read as lollard.

Dives's hijacking of the proceedings here attests to the open-ended, risky nature of vernacular religious pedagogy — especially a pedagogy committed, like Pauper's, to hermeneutic multiplicity. But it also reveals the poverty (so to speak) of narrowly anti-lollard positions. From this point on, Pauper begins to migrate towards a more centrist approach, maintaining his orthodoxy while acknowledging the value of some Wycliffite critiques. On the subject of prayer, for example, he takes the orthodox position that it is good to pray with many 'skils', including music; for just as the affections of the heart are stirred by imagery, so 'oftentyme manys herte is steryd to deuocion' in prayer by such musical 'tokenys fro outward' (I, 1.203). This, he argues, is despite the 'faytouris, heretikys, ypocritys' who 'lettyn preyere, preysyngys, melodie, song & seruyse in holy chirche' — an attack on the (perceived) liturgical austerity of the lollards, here identified only as the 'principal messageris' of the fiend (I, 1.204).³⁰ Nevertheless, it is better to say the Office 'withoutyn note' than to say it 'be note & hackyn þe wordys and þe silablis' (I, 1.206). One must not respond to heretical positions (for example, music is a pernicious distraction from the Word), by adopting a blind adherence to the polar opposite (for example, music is necessary for effective liturgical prayer). Instead, one must return to the basic principles ignored or distorted by the controversy as a whole.

²⁹ Barnum cites Augustine's exegesis of Ps. 35 [36].12, which explains that the Fall began with the 'foot of pride'; she also finds the interpretation of feet as the seat of the affections in Wyclif's Latin *Sermones* and the *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson (II, 25, n. 101/46).

³⁰ Barnum cites several lollard objections to polyphony (II, 89–90, n. 206/28–33 and n. 206/30).

This is a key discovery for *Pauper*, and it marks an important shift in the perspective of the text as a whole. Up to this point, *Pauper* has been called upon to combat the singular readings of what Reginald Pecock would later call the 'lay party', a lollard hermeneutic associated strongly with the vernacular. Gradually, however, it is becoming apparent that rejecting lollardy is not enough — especially when it leads to a position that is equally narrow. The problem, *Pauper* is coming to realize, is not just that the lollards have led the laity astray; rather, the problem for an early fifteenth-century teacher like *Pauper* is that the conflict between the lollards and their opponents has narrowed the discursive field of vernacular religious education, provoking the most ardent defenders of orthodoxy to throw out the baby (vernacular biblicism) with the bathwater (Wycliffite ecclesiology). Eventually, as we shall see below, *Pauper* will find himself coming full circle, defending (some) lollard-sounding propositions against a *Dives* who is ultimately as likely to parrot anti-lollard truisms as lollard ones. But this role reversal will come later, under the second table of commandments. Here at the end of the long, opening discussion of images — the longest section of the text devoted to a single topic — *Pauper* has taken the first, crucial step in looking beyond or behind the polarized positions of the lollards and their opponents, seeking what is missing from or occluded by the conflict between them.

This new perspective is present throughout the remainder of the first table. The discussion of the second commandment, which forbids the taking of the Lord's name in vain, is dominated by the topic of oaths, another hot-button issue in the lollard controversy. The question of whether and how to swear an oath was more than academic for later lollards, who developed a range of strategies for coping with the demand to swear an oath of allegiance to the church hierarchy. Many of the solutions they developed relied heavily upon Wycliffite sign theory, which drew a clear distinction between the physical text of the gospel and the divine meaning it communicated.³¹ William Thorpe recounts his repeated refusal to swear upon a gospel book on the grounds that 'a book is no þing ellis, no but a þing compilid togidere of diuerse creaturis, and so to

³¹ 'On the Twenty-Five Articles', one of several texts teaching lollards to respond to charges brought against them, argues that it is not legal to swear by any creature or by any member of Christ's body (Wyclif, *Select English Works*, ed. by Arnold, p. 483). This, according to Wyclif himself, includes manuscripts: 'The Scripture which is perceptible through voices and manuscripts is not Holy Scripture, except in an equivocal sense, just as we might say the picture or image of a man is called a man on account of its resemblance to the actual man. The first Scripture [that is, the meaning in the mind of God], however, is the most proper and holy' (Wyclif, *De veritate sacrae scripturae*, ed. by Levy, pp. 97–99).

swere bi a book is to swere bi dyuerse craturis; and to swere bi ony creature boþe Goddis lawe and mannes lawe is þerazen'.³² To take an oath on a physical book is thus tantamount to idolatry. *Dives and Pauper* exhibits a healthy awareness of the perils of oath-taking: to swear by God's body is to blaspheme, even to re-enact, the passion (I, 1.240), and perjury is a greater sin than murder (I, 1.252). But whereas Thorpe resorts to the nature of textual signs (and the textual nature of signs), *Dives and Pauper* instead represents oath-taking as an act of self-signifying. Perjury, the deliberate mis-signifying of the self with God as witness, is surpassed in sin only by idolatry, the fatal misreading of the divine.

Rather than defend or attack oath-taking *tout court*, Pauper emphasizes the multiple layers of 'accord' involved in this complex speech act. Just as the English of a scriptural translation must accord with the Latin, so in the swearing of an oath must the heart and mouth 'acordyn togedere' (I, 1.231).³³ Both, moreover, must accord with the understanding of the oath's recipient. Those who swear with 'slye wordys' designed to deceive are themselves forsworn, for 'God þat knowyth þi þouȝt & þin conscience takit it nout as þou menyst but as he vndirstondyt it to whom þu sweryst so in deseyt' (I, 1.235). One is reminded of the lollard Richard Wyche, who agreed to swear an oath of obedience 'limited in his heart'; as Pauper would predict, this attempt to divorce his words from his intention backfired.³⁴ Any attempt to manipulate the signifying chain that constitutes an oath is perceived by God, who, as the divine principle of accord, privileges the recipient's understanding over the speaker's deceitful intention.

What is emerging here, over the course of the text's treatment of the entire first table of commandments, is an alternative sign theory: one that integrates hermeneutic and formative models of reading, the interpretation of signs and the signifying of the self. These different models and strategies come together most fully in the reading of scripture, to which Pauper turns under the third commandment, on keeping the Sabbath. Pauper begins here with interpretive reading, which is itself multiple. The first hermeneutic strategy required is typology, for Christ came 'þat veyl & mystyhed of figuris schuldyn be don away & cesyn' (I, 1.269). Equally important, however, is an ability to distinguish between ceremonial, moral, and judicial precepts, here expounded via three-fold readings of the tabernacle, a *locus classicus* for such material. But hermeneutics is not enough. Proper reading must also involve the formation of

³² *Two Wycliffite Texts*, ed. by Hudson, p. 34.

³³ As Barnum notes (II, 104, n. 231/45–232/86), Thorpe also makes Pauper's point here; see *Two Wycliffite Texts*, ed. by Hudson, p. 78.

³⁴ 'The Trial of Richard Wyche', ed. by Matthew, 530–44.

the self in accordance with the meaning one has gleaned from the text. This requires vernacular pedagogy to move beyond exegesis and into the realm of pastoral instruction. Pauper's typological reasoning and *distinctiones* are supplemented, at Dives's prompting, by a practical list of what kinds of work to avoid on the holy day. A final turn to numerology reminds us that Christian formation requires the integration of a variety of pedagogical and readerly strategies.

The question then, as Dives's sly reading about saints' feet reminded us, is when to apply which strategy. This is a question that can be answered, for *Dives and Pauper*, only locally. There can be no universal lessons in reading, equipping the layperson successfully to negotiate every biblical text, every doctrinal dilemma. Religious instruction is always, by necessity, local and contingent. This point is emphasized by an exchange between Dives and Pauper on the subject of '[s]teraclis, pleyys, and dauncis' (I, 1.293-96). Pauper's reasoning here is moral and practical: if plays are done for the right reasons (devotion and honest mirth); with proper material (no 'ribaудye' or 'lesyngies', and certainly nothing against the faith, the 'statys' of the church, or 'good lyuynge', I, 1.293); and to good effect ('so þat þe peple be nout lettyd þerby fro Godys seryuyce ne fro Godis word herynge' (I, 1.293), then they are permissible at all times, not just on the Sabbath. Plays that fail any of these three tests are likewise prohibited at all times. We might turn for comparison to the *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, a text whose affiliation with lollardy has recently come into question, but whose sign theory is recognizably influenced by Wycliffite thinking.³⁵ The *Tretise*, as Ruth Nissé's fine reading demonstrates, draws on typology to condemn the mystery plays, arguing that the drama mires the biblical 'stori' in the carnal realm and so moves *backwards* from spirit to letter. Divorced from its textual source, the historical sense of scripture becomes in the plays a 'sign without deeds', no longer subject to the redemptive power of signification and interpretation.³⁶ *Dives and Pauper*, while juxtaposing typology and drama, does not touch this line of reasoning. For Pauper, typology explains the church's application of the third commandment regarding the Sabbath, but it is the wrong hermeneutic strategy to apply to the drama, which is properly a moral and pastoral issue. There is no sense, however, that Pauper is here offering a universal hermeneutic that will determine the application of readerly strategies for all texts/objects, once and for all. Neither Pauper nor the text ever makes such a totalizing gesture; the possibility of misreading is never fully ameliorated. This is the price to be paid

³⁵ See Clopper, 'Is the "Tretise of Miracles Pleyinge"'.

³⁶ Nissé, 'Reversing Discipline'. For the text of the *Tretise*, see *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, ed. by Davidson.

for acknowledging the complexities of hermeneutic activity and of signifying relationships.

Failures in reading and representation have national repercussions, as the layman Dives frequently points out. Most sections of the text include a lament on Dives's part for the particular sins of the English. The English prefer false prophecy to true omens, such as the comet of 1402; they would rather go to the tavern to hear 'a tale or a song of Robyn Hood or of som rybaudye' than attend church services (I, 1.189). Failures of worship are cast as failures of reading and made metonymic for a broad range of English sins. Under the second commandment, as Pauper's emphasis shifts from false reading to false signification, the history of England is described as a history of perjury effecting a series of translations: from Britons to Saxons, from Saxons to Danes, and hence to Normans. Pauper fears that England 'in schort tyme for our periurie schal ben translatyd azen to þe Bretons [that is, presumably, the French]' (I, 1.358). In a kind of inverse *translatio studii*, *translatio imperii*, failures in Christian signification result in the loss of national autonomy.

Dives and Pauper offers itself as the all-but-extraclerical remedy to these national ills. Its lessons in reading are meant to be so thorough that, as Dives puts it, 'ignorance myȝt nout excusyn me ne ony wyȝt ellys þat can resoun' (I, 1.220). Through the efforts of a teacher-figure whose own clerical status remains deliberately ambiguous, *Dives and Pauper* steps into the role vacated by a corrupt and undereducated clergy, working to rescue the laity and the nation from the effects of a dangerously haphazard readerly education. If Pauper's lessons occasionally threaten to backfire — either by raising questions they cannot answer, or through a rare successful challenge from Dives — this only serves to emphasize the complexity of the problem and the inadequacy of the lollards' singular solution.

The Second Table

Dives and Pauper began, we recall, with Pauper's rejection of Wycliffite sign theory. Over the course of the first three commandments, however, Pauper's position has shifted, and with it, the text's understanding of the challenges facing vernacular religious educators like him. What has emerged as the central problem is less lollardy *per se* (Pauper's original target) than the tendency of the lollard controversy as a whole to distort basic theological principles, and to limit the forms and practices of lay religious education: a tendency that Pauper and the text as a whole are now fully dedicated to combatting. Under the second table of commandments (consisting, we recall, of the final seven com-

mandments, which govern human relationships), Pauper is indeed more likely to expose and resist anti-lollard strategies than their Wycliffite counterparts. Rather than taking each of these final seven commandments in turn, as above, the analysis that follows focuses on two themes central to the lollard controversy as a whole, and the sites of key anti-lollard strategies in particular: biblical transmission and sacramental theology. Here, it is Pauper who in isolated moments is more likely to sound like a lollard, especially in his passionate call for more open transmission of the Word. Nonetheless, while he repeatedly makes lollard-like complaints against the contemporary clergy, Pauper always comes back around to an orthodox ecclesiology, never embracing a principled Wycliffite anticlericalism. Instead, Pauper remains focused on the complex signifying relationships involved in both biblical transmission and sacramental practices.

For Pauper, to be a Christian is to undertake a special representational responsibility. Through participation in such sacramental activities as the Mass (clerics) and marriage (laypeople), Christians from all walks of life enter into signifying relationships that require them not just to read but also to represent the divine. The clergy are responsible for representing Christ's word and his passion to their lay charges through preaching and sacrament. Emphasis throughout the second table on clerical responsibilities reminds us that, while Pauper's reading lessons are directed to a layman, the text as a whole addresses clerical teachers as well as lay students. Layfolk, in turn, are responsible for rewriting their own consciences in accordance with the commandments, so that when Christ comes to read them at the Last Judgement, he will find there an image of himself.

It is the representational burden of all Christians, lay and clerical, that renders religious pedagogy so urgent. Priests must be sufficiently educated to preach the Word and sufficiently self-disciplined to represent Christ's passion in the Mass. Married couples must understand that breaking the bonds of matrimony severs the baptismal link between human and divine. And it is this urgent need for honest and thorough religious instruction, finally, that fuels Pauper's anger at anti-lollard efforts to limit preaching and biblical translation. Like a lollard, Pauper privileges preaching over the Mass, because, as he explains it, 'be prechyng folc is steryd to contricioun', hence to love God and know virtue from vice, and thus to 'forsakyn errouris & heresie' (1, 2.23), whereas, 'zif þei comyn to mess in synne þei gone away in synne' (1, 2.23). What people most need is to be taught. Anti-lollard positions on preaching and biblical transmission anger Pauper not because they seek to replace the Word with the teachings of a corrupt church, as we would expect from a lollard, but rather because they limit pedagogical opportunities in the vernacular.

Preaching and biblical transmission were the sites of some of the most polarizing textual moves in the lollard controversy. At stake was the relative authority of the biblical text and church teachings, especially in the context of lay religious education. Should laypeople be given direct access to the Englished scriptures, or were their souls better served by sermons on church doctrine and stories of the lives of the saints? Should they encounter the life of Christ by reading the gospel text or by meditating on images and narratives of the passion? To see this debate enacted textually we need only compare the English Wycliffite Bible with Nicholas Love's explicitly anti-lollard *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. The former grounds vernacular pedagogy in English transmission of the full scriptural text, while the latter reserves biblical textuality to the clergy, grounding the moral and devotional education of the laity in thoroughly glossed stories of the life of Christ.³⁷ These mutually opposed textual strategies play out as well in the English Wycliffite Sermon Cycle (EWS) and John Mirk's orthodox *Festial*, which, both produced in the last decades of the fourteenth century, came to dominate the manuscript record of vernacular sermon collections in the post-Arundel fifteenth.³⁸ The EWS returns to the traditional homiletic form of translating and expounding the entire gospel or epistle reading for the day, carefully avoiding anything, the 'fables' or exempla of the friars in particular, that might distract the reader from the Word. Mirk's heavily narrative cycle, in sharp contrast, avoids biblical material in favour of expounding the feasts of the church and the lives of the saints.

Dives and Pauper avails itself freely of both direct biblical exposition and narrative exempla; pedagogical strategies that were divorced at the polarized heart of the lollard controversy are here promiscuously reunited. Given the enormous task of lay religious education, the author of *Dives and Pauper* refuses to limit its rhetorical options. In the service of this larger project, the Pauper of the second table comes across, ultimately, as more anti-anti-lollard than pro-

³⁷ For Love's text, see Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. by Sargent. For anti-Wycliffite material in the *Mirror* see the Introduction to Sargent's edition, pp. 54–75. For a compelling account of Love's relationship to the controversy see Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, esp. Chapter 5, 'Nicholas Love and the Lollards', pp. 147–73. Karnes challenges the connection between Love and lollardy in Karnes, 'Nicholas Love and Medieval Meditations', pp. 380–408; while I do think Love is deliberately combatting lollardy, I do not think his project can be reduced to a reactionary anti-intellectualism — as Susan Uselmann's piece in this volume beautifully attests.

³⁸ The texts of the EWS and the *Festial* can be found, respectively, in *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson and Gradon, and Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, ed. by Erbe. On the manuscript record see Spencer, *English Preaching*, pp. 269–315.

lollard,³⁹ lamenting the effects of anti-lollard legislation without jumping to Wycliffite conclusions. Pauper denounces men of Holy Church who ‘sleyne men & women gostlyche be withdrawynge & lettynge of godis word & of good techyng’ (I, 2.21) — it is hard, reading this, to imagine that he does not have Arundel’s 1409 *Constitutions* in mind⁴⁰ — and he denounces restrictions placed on ‘trewe prechours’, a lollard catch-phrase if ever there was one. But he goes on to define ‘trewe prechours’ as those who ‘han auctorite’, that is, are licensed to preach by the church. Anti-lollard legislation like the *Constitutions* threatens to criminalize vernacular biblicism and limit ‘trewe’ preaching, inadvertently contributing to the ‘gostly’ manslaughter perpetrated by corrupt clerics. But this does not mean that the entire structure of the church is corrupt and needs overthrowing. ‘Trewe’ preaching is still the province of the ordained and licensed clergy.

The clergy, for Pauper, are distinguished by their particular roles and responsibilities in representing Christ to the people. As preachers, ‘her lyf & her techyng [should] acorden with þe techyng & þe lyf of Crist’ (I, 2.226). Similarly, the priest saying Mass ‘representyth þe person of Crist’ and ‘beryth witesse of Cristes pascioun’, both in his vestments and in the words and gestures of the Mass he sings (I, 2.227). An individual priest can fail to live up to that responsibility — for example, if, in saying the Mass, he has ‘no mende of Cristis pascioun aftir þat his clopyng betokenyth ne is nout swyche as hys clopyng schewith’, he becomes a ‘fals witesse in deceyt of his neyhebores’ (I, 2.227) — but he cannot abdicate it. This basic principle is established under the fourth commandment, in relation to the question of biblical transmission.

³⁹ In this he is akin to another fifteenth-century religious writer, John the Blind Audelay. Audelay, writing a decade or two after the author of *Dives and Pauper*, similarly complains that God’s enemies

[...] call trew Cristyn men Lollard,
That kepyn Cristis comawndementis nyght and day,
And don Godis wil in dede and worde.
Agayns ham, I take Crist to wytnes;
Here is non error ne Lollardre,
Bot pistill and gospel, the Sauter, truly;
I take witnes of the treue clargy
that hand godis laus fore to redres.

But whereas Audelay goes on to list the signs by which one may identify an actual lollard, Pauper does not use the word ‘lollard’ or seek to define the category (John the Blind Audelay, ed. by Fein, p. 139).

⁴⁰ If true, this would of course suggest a date for the text closer to 1410; see n. 1, above.

Dives asks whether or not parents have the obligation to teach God's law to their children, for, as he notes, 'now men seyn þat þer schulde no lewyd foc entrymettyn hem of Godis lawe ne of þe gospel of holy writ, neyþer to connyn it ne to techyn it' (I, 1.327). Dives' articulation here of a stereotypical anti-lollard resistance to English scripture is as stark and simplistic as was his earlier, opening articulation of a stereotypical lollard hostility to images. And Pauper is, as above, unequivocal in condemning it. Here as above, moreover, Pauper responds to such stark positionality by, first, restoring traditional distinctions between different 'degrees' of reader: 'þat is a foul errour & wol perylous to mennys soule, for iche man & woman is boundyn *after his degre* to don his besynesse to knowyn Godis lawe þat he is bondyn to kepyn' (I, 1.327) [my emphasis]. A few pages later, however, Pauper's own attack on uneducated clergy itself echoes lollard polemic: 'Swich scheperdis, prelatis & curatis [that] knowyn nout Godis lawe ne þe vndirstondyng of Godis lawe' are not fathers of the people but 'woluy of raueyn þat deuouryn Godis peple' (I, 1.331). But despite this descent into lollard-like rhetoric, Pauper concludes that even 'lewyd' priests ought to be worshipped for the dignity of their office, 'nout for her persones but for God, wose persone þei *presentyn* in messe-syngynge, in schriftis-herynge & in oper sacramentis-zeuynge & in gouernynge' (I, 1.338) [my emphasis]. As with images, which are worshipped not for what they are but for what they represent, the respect and obedience owed to any priest, however wicked, depends upon his representational function.

Sacramental theology is likewise for Pauper a matter of proper representation. The sacrament of the altar 'representyth þe onhed þat is atwoxsyn Crist & holy chyrche and also it [re]presentyth þe onhed of þe soule with þe body [...] Also it representyth þe onhed of þe Godhed with our manhood in Crist' (I, 2.39). The manslayer who separates soul and body thus 'doth azenys þat sacrament' and is irregular. In the same way, a man who weds two wives '& so departyd hys flesch in dyuers women' is likewise irregular, for any such 'departyng' is 'contrarie to þis sacrament of endles charite & of ohned atwoxsyn God & holy church & atwexsyn al good cristene peple þat is in charite, for alle þey ben on & comounyn togedere in þis sacrament' (I, 2.39). The sacrament creates 'onhed' between human and divine through the mechanism of representation. Murder and bigamy are singled out as violations because they operate by separation and division, and so fail to represent sacramental accord.

This language again raises the specter of the lollard controversy while refusing to engage its polemical terms. Wyclif's denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation was the key factor in his heretication, and the Eucharist remained the central theological issue in the controversy that ensued. To read the trial

records and polemical literature associated with lollardy is to wade through endless iterations of the language of transubstantiation, with each side insisting on its unique belief in the true presence of Christ in the consecrated elements. The record is confused by the carefully ambiguous terms used by many accused lollards to avoid condemnation for heresy.⁴¹ Pauper avoids this language altogether, focusing instead on the representational dynamics of the Eucharist.⁴²

The language Pauper uses in discussing the Eucharist, moreover, echoes traditional expositions of marriage, which was commonly said to represent the unions between Christ and the church, Christ and the soul, Christ's humanity and divinity.⁴³ For Pauper, indeed, marital logic in particular grounds sacramental logic generally. He describes baptism as a 'sacrament of unite & of þe endles loue atwoxsyn þe Godhead & þe manhed in Crist, very God & very man, & atwoxsyn Crist & holy chirche & atwoxsyn Crist & cristene soule' (I, 2.60). Now, Pauper does also use such language in its traditional marital context; under the sixth commandment, it is marriage rather than the Eucharist that 'presentyth þe grete sacrament of unite & of þe endles loue atwoxsyn þe Godhead & þe manhed in Crist, very God & very man, & atwoxsyn Crist & holy chirche & atwoxsyn Crist & cristene soule' (I, 2.60). Furthermore, the love between husband and wife 'betokenyth þe loue þat we owyn to God þat is our gostly housebond, to whom we ben weddyd in our bapteme' (I, 2.61). The effect of using this marital language to describe these three sacraments is to emphasize the common representational dynamics of all three: of the Eucharist, the sacrament most fully associated with the clergy; of marriage, the only sacrament restricted to laypeople; and of baptism, the only sacrament that can be performed *in extremis* by a layperson, and the *sine qua non* of sacramental participation for everyone.

To enter into a literal marriage is to assume a representational responsibility parallel to, if distinct from, that assumed by the preacher or by the priest saying Mass. Violations of marriage, as failures of representation, undermine the sacramental 'onhed' between human and divine. In the case of bigamy, the example invoked earlier in relation to the Eucharist, when either partner has 'departhyd

⁴¹ For recent discussions of the role of eucharistic theology in the lollard controversy see Hornbeck, *What is a Lollard?*, chap. 3, "The Eucharist," and Aers, *Sanctifying Signs*, esp. chapters 3 and 4.

⁴² Barnum notes that this is the 'longest passage on the Eucharist in *D&P*', and that it 'deals only with the symbolism of the rite' (II, 185, nn. 2–38/37).

⁴³ See d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage*. For an excellent recent study of marital theory and practice in late medieval England, see Lipton, *Affections of the Mind*.

his flesh aforȝ' in a previous marriage there is 'a defaute in þat matrimonie as anemyst þe sacrament, for her matrimonye betokenyth nout perfytyl þe matrimonie atwoxsyn Crist & holy chirche' (I, 2.113). When a man takes a second wife, 'þan goth he from vnite to pluralyte', and so the marriage 'may not sygnifyyn perfytyl' the conjunctions of Christ and church, divinity and humanity — 'for þer þe þing tokenyd is but on, þe þing tokenynge þat þing must ben on, and þe þing tokenyd & þe þing tokynynge þat þing must ben lyk' (I, 2.114).⁴⁴ Each marriage must stand as a true representation of sacramental accord.

On the national level, healthy sacramental unions depend upon open transmission of the Word. Dives blames a national epidemic of lechery and adultery, in which the English behave 'as dede þe folc of Sodom', on new restrictions on vernacular biblical transmission: 'Godis lawe is forȝetyn and defendyd þat men schul nout connyn it ne han it in her moder tunge' (I, 2.64). Pauper agrees and offers several Old Testament exempla, including David and Bathsheba and the Flood, in support of the idea that 'þe ground & þe begynnyng of euery peple is lauful wedlac' (I, 2.65). This somewhat counterintuitive logic — lack of access to the Word results in a national plague of sodomy — becomes more legible in the context of lollard retropings of marriage.⁴⁵ The lollards, like Pauper, were interested in marital logic. Lollard polemic, however, tends to eschew the traditional tropes of marital union that Pauper invokes, refiguring marriage as the union between the biblical text and its meaning, and between the preacher and the Word. To violate that union by withholding the Word from the people or inserting other material (exempla, saints' lives) into the relationship is to commit the worst kind of spiritual adultery.⁴⁶ While *Dives and Pauper* does not embrace lollard retropings of marriage, its rhetoric links gospel preaching, marital fidelity, and national unity in ways that reflect an awareness of Wycliffite projects. Rather than reconfigure traditional tropes, *Dives and Pauper* uses marital logic both to ground its orthodox sacramental theology and to call for freer transmission of the Word.

Through its treatment of preaching and sacrament, then, *Dives and Pauper* establishes the representational function of all Christians: it is the job of every Christian not only to interpret the union between human and divine, but also to represent or signify that 'onhed' or accord. The layperson's representational

⁴⁴ Interestingly Barnum, whose notes are remarkably thorough in citing the text's sources in theology and, especially, canon law, cites no source for this objection to second marriages.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the role of sodomy as a common 'reverse accusation' in the controversy as a whole, see Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, pp. 55–99.

⁴⁶ I develop this argument more fully elsewhere; see my "'Trewe Men'", pp. 117–30.

function differs crucially from that of the priest, for whom the representation of Christ is a pedagogical as well as a sacramental mandate. But through reading and sacrament the lay student still enters into signifying relationships designed to create and maintain 'onhed' with God.

All sin is thus on some level a matter of mis-reading and/or mis-signifying. Because we are married to Christ in baptism, *all* sin is 'gostly auoutrye' (I, 2.110), and any fleshly thought constitutes adultery with the fiend (I, 2.119). (Pauper does specify some sins as spiritual adultery 'principaly', namely, 'idolatrie & forsakyng of þe feith', along with 'fals prechyng & fals expositioun of holy writ' done for worldly gain, I, 2.120; the marital union between human and divine is especially threatened by practices that abandon true teaching and worship in favour of worldly objects.) Even theft, the topic of the seventh commandment, is for Pauper most basically a matter of 'gyle' or 'fenyng' (I, 2.209). And the section on the eighth commandment, which forbids bearing false witness, consists of an exploration of 'fenyng' and of the complex signifying relationships that pertain between inward truth and outward sign.

In its intertwined explorations of sacrament and sin, *Dives and Pauper* thus increasingly blurs the lines between reading and representation. The closer we get to the end, moreover — to the end of the text, and to the end of the *sae-culum* — the less time and energy Pauper has for debate. Reading lessons and dialogue, never fully abandoned, gradually give way to strategies for cleansing the self in preparation for its final, eschatological reading by God.⁴⁷ If the 'less perfect' lay reader began by learning to read the divine in images, he (most immediately Dives, though there is no indication that the substantial female audience for vernacular religious texts is excluded here) will end by becoming himself an object of divine reading at the Last Judgement. He must learn, then, to represent himself, in both the literary and the legal senses of that term.

The extended treatment of 'fenyng' under the eighth commandment bears witness to the difficulty and complexity of self-representation, of bearing true witness to the self. Towards the end of that commandment, Dives's question about bearing witness 'in doom', that is, in judgements at law (I, 2.232) provides Pauper with the opening he needs to turn the subject to the Final Judgement. The marital trope that has grounded Pauper's sacramental theology returns here. If you are found in deadly sin on the Last Day, 'þu art bigamous, and twyys weddit, first to Crist in þin bapteme and aftir to þe fend be assent of

⁴⁷ Barnum notices this, too: 'The balance shifts towards the end of Commandment VIII xiv, when Christ and the Doom are invoked. From this point onward, the text is less dialogic, more preacherly and shaped to create an apocalyptic mood' (II, p. xxxvii).

senne', and so you are 'widue from Crist, weddit to anȝir widwe þat is þe fend, forsakyn of god for his pryde, to whom he was weddit at þe begynnyng of þe world' (I, 2.240). Dives still seeks lessons in reading, asking for a list of tokens of the final coming. But Pauper redirects Dives' attention to his own status as text. On the last day, God will ask a 'rekenyng & answer' of his blessings and 'þe lytteris and þe talyys of our conscience shule answeryn' (I, 2.149). In a final and unassailable act of signification, God will write in the conscience of each damned, 'mane, techel, phares' (I, 2.250).

In the 'Holy Poverty' prologue, Pauper had told Dives that the only requirement for the 'less perfect' Christian is to follow the commandments. We have seen by now that that is no simple task. Learning to read and represent the divine involves Dives in a plethora of complex signifying relationships. The lay reader stands in constant need of Pauper's guidance and instruction. There is one object of reading, however, that Pauper is invited to engage on his own. That object is the passion, which appears with increasing frequency under the second table of commandments, as the emphasis shifts from reading the divine to representing the self. Through passion-reading, *Dives and Pauper* moves its pedagogy most clearly into the devotional realm, offering the lay reader the surest means of cleansing and rewriting the self.⁴⁸

The passion stands as a special kind of readerly object in *Dives and Pauper*, repeatedly re-formed in different representational contexts in order to reform the reading subject. We have already seen the first of these iterations, in Pauper's double reading of the crucifix during the long initial discussion of images. Dives was there invited, we recall, to 'take heid' of each visual element of the crucifix in turn, using each to remind him of a key moral (in the first reading) or devotional tenet (in the second). Rather than moving from letter to spirit, Old Law to New, the reader of the crucifix moves from image to moral doctrine to affective union with Christ. The kind of reading required here is formative, re-memorative, rather than hermeneutic or exegetical: it is a heed-taking, a structured series of acts of remembering and feeling which both renders the image legible and reforms the reading subject. The passion becomes the vehicle or 'hinge' through which the reader brings his or her behaviour and affect into accord with the divine.⁴⁹ This reformative process of reading requires multi-

⁴⁸ An earlier version of this final section of the essay was presented at the conference, 'After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England', at the University of Oxford, 16–19 April 2009.

⁴⁹ I use this term following Amsler, 'Affective Literacy'.

ple levels of readerly engagement. Like the interpretive or hermeneutic reading of the biblical text, the formative reading of the passion has the potential for infinite multiplication. But unlike the interpretation of the commandments, passion-reading does not carry with it the danger of misreading. While *Pauper* does offer guidance to *Dives* in engaging the passion, *Dives and Pauper* never raises the possibility that the passion could be misread: *Dives* never offers a 'bad' reading that needs to be corrected. In a text that proceeds largely via the correction of *Dives's* bad readings, this is remarkable.

The special status of the passion as a 'safe' object of lay reading in *Dives and Pauper* could seem to align the text with anti-lollard programs, such as Nicholas Love's. The passion lies at the heart of the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*; Love frequently tells us he is cutting and abridging his source to arrive there more quickly.⁵⁰ The passion provides Love's vernacular readers with the surest and richest alternative to Wycliffite textual programs, and to the Englished Bible in particular. Love's model of reading begins and ends with compassion. He famously exhorts visual, imaginative engagement with the passion narrative, inviting his 'simple' reader to participate in the events narrated. The practitioner of this model of reading is rewarded with

many deuout felynges & stirynges þat he neuer supposed before. Of þe wheche he shulde fele a newe compassion & a newe loue, & haue newe gostly confortes, þorh þe wech he shold perceyue him self turned as it were in to a newe astate of soule, in þe which astate þoo foreside gostly felynges, shold seme to him as a nerneste & partie of þe blisse & joy to come.⁵¹

Like the Eucharist in Love's concluding *Treatise on the Sacrament*, devotional engagement with the passion offers the reader access to 'ghostly feelings' denied those who, like the lollards, rely solely on their own, external faculties of reason.⁵²

Avowedly Wycliffite texts, while not devoid of affective spirituality,⁵³ tend to treat the passion primarily as a privileged site of knowledge and of exemplarity. The English Wycliffite Sermon for Good Friday begins, 'Now shulen men speke of Cristis passioun, and se in what fourme he suffride, for ech dede þat Christ

⁵⁰ Love, *Mirror*, pp. 75–76, 141. For a detailed account of Love's 'transformation' of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, see Sargent's Introduction in Love, *Mirror*, pp. 38–54.

⁵¹ Love, *Mirror*, p. 162.

⁵² Love, *Mirror*, p. 227. For a compelling alternative reading of the role of reason in Love's model of devotional reading, see Uselmann's essay in this volume.

⁵³ See Somerset, 'Wycliffite Spirituality', pp. 375–86.

did shulde be lore to men'.⁵⁴ The passion is a treasure-trove of information, for those who know how to read it; 'ech part [...] tellip, bi oþer witt þan þe lettere, how men shulden lyue, and what shal falle boþe in þis world and þe toþir'.⁵⁵ As in the EWS generally, however, much of the 'lore' this sermon provides is polemical. From Christ's behaviour before the high priests we learn 'how preestis shulde preche opynly', and not 'bi shrift of rowynyng to men'. Christ is persecuted unjustly for heresy, just as now unjust rulers 'brennen men as heretikes, for þei mayteynen Goddis lawe'.⁵⁶ Pedagogy and polemic are intertwined, making passion-reading the vehicle of a Wycliffite ecclesiological agenda.

Lollard re-imaginings of the crucifixion, in turn, provide insight into the working out of Wycliffite sign theories.⁵⁷ The most famous is Margery Baxter's stretching out her arms and declaring, in the trial records' translation, '*hic est vera crux Cristi*'.⁵⁸ William Thorpe, whose Oxford-educated Wycliffism lies at the opposite end of the spectrum from Margery's late, domestic lollardy, images his interrogation as a discursive crucifixion: 'as a tree leyde vpon an oþer tree ouerthwert on crosse wyse, so weren þe Archebisshop and his þree clerkis alwei contrarie to me and I to hem'.⁵⁹ Thorpe's occluded image of crucifixion draws on the exemplary logic of hagiography, overlaying the narrative of Christ's life on Thorpe's own. To take a lesser-known instance, the twelfth tract of Cambridge University Library, MS Ii.6.26 presents Christ as the 'most blessed loller', 'for our synnes lollynge on þe rode-tree'. Those who follow Christ are similarly 'blessed lollers, lollynge on þe riȝt honde of Iesu wiþ þe repentant þeeþ', while 'wicked lolleres [...] lolled on þe left side wiþ þe þeeþ þat blasfemed aȝens Crist', along with Judas, who 'lollid him self to þe deef'.⁶⁰ Where Andrew Cole notes the bifurcation of the category 'lollard' in this passage,⁶¹ I find its distinctive imaging of the crucifixion advancing an exemplarism akin to Thorpe's, as against Franciscan meditative models. The incessant repetition of 'loller' — spelled in an unusual variety of ways, 'loller', 'lollier', 'lolleres' — emphasizes this deliberate act of resignification.

⁵⁴ *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson and Gradon, III, 172.

⁵⁵ *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson and Gradon, III, 187.

⁵⁶ *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. by Hudson and Gradon, III, 181.

⁵⁷ See Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', pp. 99–113; also Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, pp. 21–23.

⁵⁸ *Heresy Trials*, ed. by Tanner, p. 44.

⁵⁹ *Two Wycliffite Texts*, ed. by Hudson, p. 93.

⁶⁰ 'Cambridge Tract XII', in *The Earliest Advocates*, ed. by Dove, p. 131.

⁶¹ Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, pp. 48–49.

Despite its superficial affinities with Love's project, I find *Dives and Pauper* negotiating carefully between these mutually opposed models of reading and representing the passion. While passion-reading in *Dives and Pauper* is primarily formative rather than hermeneutic, it cannot be neatly contained by Love's modified Franciscan model, in large part because it appears in so many different representational contexts. Nor does the text embrace Wycliffite exemplarism, much less lollard ecclesiology. The passion is not here primarily a source of knowledge or an example to be imitated; instead, it is a privileged site of lay reading that bridges the divide between intellect and affect, interpretation and devotion, constantly shifting to accommodate the local needs of the reader seeking to achieve union with the divine.

Tellingly, the passion is twice imaged in *Dives and Pauper* through clothing, a legible sign that can be 'put on' by the reader to reshape and represent his or her own identity. Under the sixth commandment, where passion devotion is offered as a primary remedy against lechery (1, 2.99), Christ is allegorized as a prince who married a pauper against the will of his people, and sends his bloody shirt (the passion) as a token to his beloved when he is wounded in battle. Dives the reader, cast in the role of spouse and pauper (rather than, as in a common variant of this allegory, as a hard-hearted courtly beloved),⁶² is enjoined to hang this bloody shirt in his heart and look upon it when tempted by the world, the flesh, or the devil. This allegory participates in a long-standing tradition of 'converting' romance tropes to spiritual ends.⁶³ The story in *Dives* is studded with Latin and English verses and concludes with a plea to Dives, here addressed as 'leue frend', to 'hangit þis schyrt in a pryue place of 3our chambre, þat is to seye, settyth cristis passion endirlych in herte' (1, 2.102). The sequence as a whole ends with a short Latin text from a 'holy man' rendered into a several-stanza English lyric on the passion, and taking the form of a first-person meditation. Here, as frequently, the passion inspires a multiplication of discursive modes, Latin as well as English, verse mixed in with prose, which suggests its fecundity as an object of reading and meditation.

Clothing appears again as a vehicle for passion-reading under the eighth commandment, this time in a clerical and sacramental context. It is here that

⁶² See Bryan, *Looking Inward*, pp. 121–22.

⁶³ Bryan discusses the devotional strain of this tradition as it appears in the *Tretyse of Love* and *A Talkynge of the Loue of God* (Bryan, *Looking Inward*, pp. 113–22) — and, we might note, in many Middle English Marian lyrics. The same basic strategy is evident in earlier instructional texts, such as the *Cursor Mundi* and *Handlyng Synne*. The audience of the former, for example, is enjoined to take Mary as 'lemmon' and 'paramour'; 'Of suchon shulde 3e matere take/ 3e crafty þat con rymes make' (*The Southern Version of the 'Cursor mundi'*, ed. by Horrall, pp. 85–86).

Pauper explains the Mass as a representation of the passion. In response to Dives's queries, he expounds the vestments twice, with each piece of clothing representing first an instrument of the passion, and second a virtue or body of knowledge required of true priests — hope, the commandments and counsels of Christ, charity, the two Testaments (I, 2.228).⁶⁴ Priests who uses these 'tokenys of Cristis passioun' but 'han no deuocioun' or 'mende' in that passion, we recall, 'beryn fals witnesse, for it is nout with hem inward as þe tokenys schewyn outward' (I, 2.229). At the same time, just as it is a sin for a priest or bishop to 'warcyn [...] aʒeyns þe tokeyns þat he beryth of holynesse', so 'it is a lesyng ony man or woman to seyn hymself cristene & doth nout ne lyuyth nout as a cristene man or woman'; thus 'euery wyckyd lyuere is a lyere' (I, 2.231). When Christ shows the wounds and instruments of his passion to those on his left at the Last Judgement (I, 2.243), the *arma Christi* will no longer be objects of formative reading; it will then be too late for those damned souls to read in the passion anything but their own doom. The passion here stands as a reminder to Dives, and to the reader, to keep reading while we still can.

The tenth and final commandment is framed in *Dives and Pauper* by the passion. Early on in this final section of commentary, Pauper again recommends passion meditation as a remedy for lechery, repeating much material from his earlier treatment (I, 2.301–02). Towards the end, as the culmination of an extensive discussion of the Pauline armour of spiritual knighthood, the spear is allegorized as Christ's passion (I, 2.311). Just previously, the sword had been identified as the word of God. The juxtaposition of sword and spear, Word and passion, provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the models of reading and signification taught in relation to each. The sword of the Word is a defensive weapon, 'be whyche ʒe schul defendyn ʒou from alle gostly emenyys' (I, 2.311). Its primary function is one of separation and division:

For as þe swerd persith and cuttyth & makyth separacion, so Goddis word & prechyng and techyng & redyng of Goddis word and of Goddis lawe partyth mannys herte & wommanys and makith separacion atwoxsyn synful soulys and her synne & departyth asundre wyckyd companye and makith separacion of mannys herte from erdely couetyse (I, 2.311).

To gird on this sword is to 'festyth it wel in ʒoure herte be herynge and be redyng, be techyng and be dede doyng' (I, 2.311). The Word is an instrument by which the human heart is separated from sin and from the occasions or instruments of sin. But the ultimate purpose of reading, as we have seen all

⁶⁴ This traditional material derives from Durandus, *The Sacred Vestments*.

along, is not separation from sin but union with the divine — although the latter is only possible upon condition of the former. Thus, *pace* devotional models like Love's, it is only once one has girded on the sword of the Word that one can take up the spear of the passion:

& þan takith to 3ou þe spere of Cristis passion & þinkith how he was smet to þe herte for 3our sake with þat scharpe spere and hys syde openyd & his herte clofyn in two for to schewyn 3ou how mychil he louede 3ou. And þan he schadde out of hys herte blood & watyr in tokene þat 3if he hadde mor blood mor he wolde a schat for 3our loue (I, 2.311).

The sword divides, the spear pierces; one separates the Christian from sin, the other cleaves Christ's heart to show his love. The Word is an object of hearing and reading, teaching and doing. The passion is an object of meditation ('þinkith how [...]'). Both are needed, and in their proper order. The former requires instruction; the latter, love.

Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, famously commended by Archbishop Arundel *ad fidelum edificacionem, & hereticorum siue lollardorum confutacionem* [to the edification of the faithful, and the confusion of heretics and lollards],⁶⁵ offers the laity devotional engagement with biblical images and narratives in place of intellectual engagement with the text of the Wycliffite Bible. *Dives and Pauper* insists upon the need for both: text and image, hermeneutics and meditation. I began this essay by acknowledging that *Dives and Pauper* is perhaps not easily classified as devotional text; I am now arguing that devotional reading nevertheless plays a key role in the treatise's educational project. I would like to conclude by suggesting that the multiplicity of reading strategies represented, taught, and modelled over the course of the text belies the usefulness of such labels around the turn of the fifteenth century in England. The emergent textual culture of Middle English religious writing, with its rapid proliferation of textual modes and models of reading, had irrevocably blurred boundaries between such categories as devotional and instructional, theological and pastoral, affective and intellective. These boundaries, too, both sides in the lollard controversy often sought to police. But 'grey area' texts like *Dives* suggest the spiritual value of such discursive blurrings — even as they acknowledge the limits of lay readerly education.

Pauper's lessons in reading the Ten Commandments, however voluminous, are necessarily incomplete. 'Now, leue frend', he announces near the end of the

⁶⁵ For Arundel's 'Memorandum' and its textual history see Love, *Mirror*, p. 7, and Introduction, pp. 36–37.

text, 'I haue *in party* declared to 3ou þe ten comandementis by whyche 3e must gouernyn 3our lyf 3if 3e wol be sauýd' (I, 2.312) [my emphasis].⁶⁶ Having limited the spiritual needs of the 'less perfect' layperson to the commandments — potentially a 'conservative' move at a time when laypeople were gaining access to ever more material traditionally reserved to the clergy, from the biblical text to monastic contemplation — Pauper goes on to develop a vernacular pedagogy grounded in the potentially infinite multiplication of reading. Lessons in reading end only in the eschaton. Significantly, then, *Dives and Pauper* concludes, like its fourteenth-century literary counterpart *Pearl*, with a vision of the celestial city as described by 'sent Ion' in 'þe booc of Goddis priueteis' (I, 2.320). Not unlike sections XVII and XVIII in *Pearl*, Cap. IX under the tenth commandment is 'a glossed translation of Revelations 21. 10–27 with interpolations from Matthew and the Book of Tobit' (II, 322, n. 2–320/2). Dives, however, again not unlike the *Pearl*-narrator, cannot allow the text to end with this culminating vision of heaven. He wonders how anyone, believing in such bliss, could ever fall prey to sin. Pauper's final lesson, responding to this question, acknowledges both the limitations of earthly education and the fullness of heavenly reward. He offers Dives an exemplary tale from Gregory of a child born in prison who does not believe in the light he has never seen (I, 2.323–24). This miniature allegory is followed by a list of various scriptural rapturings (St Peter at the transfiguration; St Paul ravished into heaven in a vision; Moses on Mt. Sinai). Pauper's dual lesson here stands as a parable for his vernacular pedagogy as it has developed throughout the text. If we can never have full knowledge in this life, all the more reason to multiply our efforts to understand, resisting anything that limits the full range of religious teaching. The main danger of the lollard controversy is not that one side or the other will win, but that the battle itself will impoverish vernacular religious education.

⁶⁶ Cf. another vernacular theologian perhaps writing across the turn of the fifteenth century, Julian of Norwich, near the end of the Long Text of her *Revelation of Love*: 'This booke is begunne be Gods gift and his grace, but it is not yet performid, as to my syte' (Julian of Norwich, *Revelation*, ed. by Glasscoe, p. 134). On the dating of Julian's text and revisions, see Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *A Revelation of Love*'.

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MEDITATIVE READING AND THE VESPERS ANTIPHON IN THE MONASTIC OFFICE FOR SAINT CUTHBERT*

Karmen Lenz

This essay examines the monastic approach to liturgical reading in post-Conquest England, during a time when the performance of the Divine Office for St Cuthbert had shifted from a form of public worship to one of private devotion. Christopher Baswell points out the special role of Latin textual culture in England after 1066, which had ‘to bridge the religious, social and cultural fissures opened by the Conquest’.¹ Despite the ‘general eclipse’ of Norman monastic influence in England, English monastic practices flourished in northern communities under the guidance of Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, and Æthelwig, Abbot of Evesham.² During this period, St Cuthbert and his shrine revitalized English monastic identity, just as his iconic status had earlier unified northern and southern English identity under King Æthelstan.³ The Divine Office of St Cuthbert, which flourished between 1083 and 1150, was particularly crucial to the monastic revival in the North, and offers insight into the means by which a national symbol could help to transform the role of

* This article is dedicated to the memory of Stephen Stallcup, my colleague and friend.

¹ Christopher Baswell, ‘Latinas’, p. 122.

² Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, pp. 159–68, esp. p. 159.

³ Gretsch provides a comprehensive study of the saint’s influence in Æthelstan’s court as he sought to unify northern and southern England; see her book, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 65–101.

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the imagination in liturgical meditation and prayer.⁴ Examination of the antiphon sung daily at Vespers reveals that monastic readers after the Conquest envisioned the performance of the devotional ritual of the Divine Office as a rich integration of Anglo-Saxon musical, biblical, and literary texts. This study centres on two chants, the Vespers antiphon and the canticle that follows it in the monastic Office of Vespers. The antiphon in particular provides a medieval reading of multiple sources, adapting diction from passages in the Old and New Testaments, Bede's metrical *Life of St Cuthbert* (*Vita Cuthberti Metrica*, hereafter, VCM),⁵ and one of the Great 'O' antiphons. Embedded within the Vespers antiphon, these combined sources venerate Cuthbert as the saint who lived in imitation of Christ. Further, they celebrate England as the land that gave birth to Cuthbert and is thus a geographical symbol of Mary. As a result, the antiphon exemplifies the interdisciplinary nature of liturgical reading in the High Middle Ages. The Divine Office enacted meditation through sung performance in a rich form of *lectio divina* as a variation upon the intertextual nature of meditative reading.⁶

Already well known in Northumbria not long after his death in 687 CE, Cuthbert's exemplary life was transformed in the eighth century by the Venerable Bede into a symbol of England's identity as a Christian nation.⁷ The original Office, the first manuscript to present the Vespers antiphon, composed sometime between 934 and 939 CE in northern England, was written for the laity. It appeared in a manuscript now housed in Cambridge (Corpus Christi College, MS 183), where it is preserved alongside Bede's prose and verse renditions of the *Life of St Cuthbert*.⁸ Æthelstan presented the manuscript to the

⁴ Christopher Hohler gives these dates in his portion of his collaborative study with Anselm Hughes, 'The Durham Services in Honour of St Cuthbert', pp. 155–91, esp. p. 157.

⁵ The Latin edition is *Bedas metrische Vita sancti Cuthberti*, ed. by Jaeger.

⁶ On intertextuality and modes of reading involved in the development of *lectio divina* in the Middle Ages, see the study by C. Annette Grisé in this volume.

⁷ The first narrative of his life, written by an anonymous monk, appears as early as 699 CE. See *The Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. and trans. by Colgrave, p. 13. The earliest liturgical work dedicated to him was the Mass performed at Fulda in 744, perhaps established by Boniface himself. See Orchard, 'A Note on the Masses for St Cuthbert', pp. 79–98, esp. p. 86. In her study of the cathedral Office of Matins, Gretsch examines the close relationship between Bede's poetic diction in the *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* and its integration into the chants in Matins. I present my analysis of the cathedral version and its shared material with the antiphons from the Carolingian and versified Office in 'Liturgical Readings of the Cathedral Office for Saint Cuthbert', pp. 7–8.

⁸ The manuscript is described carefully by Budney, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscripts*, no. 12. Catalogue descriptions of the Divine Office in detail are found in

religious community at Chester-le-Street in an attempt to unify northern and southern England through common veneration of St Cuthbert.⁹ This cathedral version was itself highly innovative, for it was one of the first versified Offices written. The Office presents two liturgical hours, Vespers and Matins, with four Lauds of Matins.

The later version of the Office is a monastic one.¹⁰ The composer preserved the material from the first version and enriched it with additional chants that further established Cuthbert's spiritual kinship with biblical figures. This version rose in popularity in the late eleventh century and remained so throughout the Renaissance. Although Cuthbert was known on the Continent well before the eleventh century, his popularity increased through the transmission of the manuscripts containing the monastic services housed in Fulda, Trondheim, and Paris.¹¹ Even though this shift would have altered Cuthbert's identity as a national icon of English sainthood, the monastic Office surely fulfilled Bede's spiritual intent to establish the saint as a universal symbol of holiness in Christian society.

In this essay, I contend that this process of sanctifying the imagination was a key feature of the monastic version of the Office of the Vespers of St Cuthbert and its approach to liturgical reading. One of the distinctions that sets the monastic Office apart from the Cathedral Office is the frequency of its performance. The monastic Office was celebrated daily at Lauds and Vespers in contrast to the Cathedral Office, which was performed on the feast days,

Sole, 'Some Anglo-Saxon Cuthbert Liturgica: the Manuscript Evidence', pp. 1–22, 104–44; and Hughes, 'British Rhymed Offices'. Sole provides an analysis of all three copies of the cathedral Office and presents her edition as it appears in BL, MS Harley 1117. As yet, no manuscript copies of the other cathedral versions appear in print. The CANTUS database, <http://cantusdatabase.org>, lists each chant from the Divine Office with further notes and bibliography.

⁹ As argued by Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints*, esp. pp. 65–101.

¹⁰ Hohler and Hughes present the monastic edition with analysis and apparatus in 'The Durham Services in Honour of St Cuthbert', pp. 155–91, esp. p. 156. I use this edition throughout. Hohler analyses the history of the manuscripts, and Hughes provides an edition of the music in the monastic version. In his 'best' edition, he presents liturgical features with musical notation that occur most frequently in the manuscripts.

¹¹ In his collaborative study with Hohler, Hughes presents a table of liturgical items in the Divine Office cross-referenced with manuscripts as part of the critical apparatus. Each manuscript represents one version of the Divine Office. The editor lists fourteen instances of the Vespers Antiphon and psalm in the fourteen different versions of the monastic Divine Office. See pp. 159–62 for a list of all liturgical manuscripts composed for Cuthbert's services, and pp. 188–89 for the table of manuscripts cross-listed with liturgical items.

the eve of the spiritual birthday of Cuthbert, 20 March, and his translation, 4 September.¹² The Vespers Office begins with four antiphons or brief chants; a reading from Ecclesiasticus 44. 16–17; a simple responsory (a response, versicle, and repeated phrase of the response or repetenda); the hymn *Magnus Miles*; the Great Vespers antiphon; the *Magnificat* canticle; and prayer.¹³ Enriched with additional chants at the height of its development, the monastic version of the Divine Office differed from its cathedral counterpart by capturing the intimate quality of sung poetry as a form of meditation that prepared the mind for prayer.

The representation of meditative prayer in the Office invokes a rich array of biblical and literary allusions. Paul Jasmer notes that the monastic Vespers Hour was characterized by unceasing prayer, which distinguished it from the Cathedral Office.¹⁴ Meditation, reading, and prayer formed a single process in which one sounded out or sang highly allusive texts while recollecting the full range of biblical and ecclesiastical sources that informed the text.¹⁵ The reader, in Jean LeClercq's formulation, was a 'living concordance' who could instantaneously recall entire passages. In reminiscence, verbal echoes would 'so excite the memory that a mere allusion [would] spontaneously evoke whole quotations' (73). This creative process of recollection would sanctify the imagination.

The Vespers Antiphon in the Divine Office for St Cuthbert and the Advent Great 'O' Antiphon

The Vespers antiphon exemplifies the intertextual nature of the versified or rhymed Office. The antiphon, like all the liturgical text of the versified Office, is a newly composed chant.¹⁶ It is a centonization, or synthesis, of multiple texts from hagiography, traditional chants, poetry, and biblical material to place the

¹² Hohler, 'The Durham Services', pp. 155–59. The celebration of Cuthbert's spiritual birthday and his deposition was conducted on 20 March 687 CE, and one of his translations appears to have been performed in 830 CE on 4 September.

¹³ I am using van Dijk's term 'Great antiphon' to describe the central antiphon in the Vespers Office to distinguish this antiphon that comes later in the service from the briefer antiphons paired with psalms that open the service: Van Dijk, 'The Bible in Liturgical Use', pp. 220–52, esp. pp. 231–33.

¹⁴ Jasmer, 'A Comparison of Monastic and Cathedral Vespers', pp. 337–61, esp. p. 337.

¹⁵ LeClercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, pp. 73–75.

¹⁶ The earliest composition of the versified Office is the Office for Trinity Sunday composed by or for Stephen of Liège (c. 920).

saint within ecclesiastical history. In the antiphon the borders between biblical ages collapse and the Old Testament, the New Testament, and ecclesiastical history become synchronous in this meditative form. The versified antiphon falls neatly into eight-syllable verses and appears in both versions of the versified Office as follows:

Oriens sol iustitiae
Per ministros lucis suae
Ipsi laus qui dedit Anglis
Cuthbertum bonum doctorem

(The rising sun of justice
through the ministers of His light
Praise to Him who gave the English
Cuthbert the good doctor,

dignatus est illustrare
cunctos fines orbis terrae
lucernam suae salutis
ac pro huius intercessorem

deigned to illuminate
all the boundaries of the earth
the lamp of His salvation
and [praise to Him] for his intercession*)

* Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

The antiphon resonates with chants sung in the same service, the hymn *Magnus Miles* before it and the *Magnificat* directly after it, and the antiphon integrates diction from an earlier Carolingian antiphon and Bede's poetic preface to his *VC*M. Both sources draw material from Luke 1. 78–79. To further the link between Cuthbert and Christ, the liturgist based the Cuthbert antiphon on an earlier Carolingian antiphon sung at Vespers during the Advent season, on 21 December.¹⁷ The Vespers antiphon in the Office for St Cuthbert adapts diction from the Great 'O' antiphon, composed during Charlemagne's reign. It appears to be a shortened variation on the fifth of the seven Great 'O' antiphons, popularized by Amalarius of Metz c. 830 CE:

O oriens, splendor lucis eternae et sol iustitiae: veni et illumina sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis.

(O rising brightness of eternal light and sun of justice: Come and shed light upon those remaining in darkness and in the shadow of death.)¹⁸

¹⁷ I present analysis of the Carolingian antiphon with the antiphon in the Divine Office for Cuthbert in 'Liturgical Readings of the Cathedral Office for Saint Cuthbert', pp. 7–8.

¹⁸ Among the numerous manuscripts containing the Great 'O' antiphons is Worcester, Worcester Cathedral, MS F.160, fol. 10^v. For studies of the Great 'O' antiphons in this manuscript, see Roper, *Medieval English Benedictine Liturgy*; for a study of the Great 'O' antiphons and their adaptation in the *Exeter Book*, see Rankin, 'The Liturgical Background of the Old English Advent Lyrics', pp. 317–37; and Huglo, 'Antiphon', p. 478. Fiala highlights the meditative significance of the Great 'O' antiphons in 'Eine Sonderform der O-Antiphonen', pp. 261–67.

This antiphon conforms to the characteristic pattern of the seven Great ‘O’ antiphons: the two phrases following the opening apostrophe elaborate the descriptions of Christ (‘brightness of eternal light’ and ‘sun of justice’); the exhortation to Christ to come to humankind follows in the next strophe. The antiphon sung for Cuthbert varies this pattern. The chant opens with a description of the splendour of Christ granted to the world as light reflected through the saints.

The worshippers would have simultaneously recalled several texts as they sang the chants in Vespers. The Great ‘O’ antiphon and its accompanying canticle are rooted in the Magnificat and Benedictus canticles of the Gospel of Luke. These biblical songs are echoed in the poetic preface to Bede’s *VC*M and in the text of the Great ‘O’ antiphon. In turn, these texts resonate in at least two different melodic settings for the hymn *Magnus Miles*, which would also have been sung in the Vespers Office. All of these texts and melodies pair Cuthbert with Christ to portray Cuthbert as an earthly imitation of Christ. While the Great ‘O’ antiphon invokes Christ to come and guide humankind, the antiphon for Cuthbert venerates his humility as one who lives in imitation of Christ.

Liturgical reading here is thus designed to underscore the relationship between sacred and human history. This traditional antiphon incorporates strictly biblical text — passages from Luke and the Old Testament prophets Isaiah, Malachi, and Zechariah.¹⁹ The source antiphon offers the diction for the phrase *oriens sol iustitiae* and echoes these words in Malachi 4. 2: ‘the sun of justice will rise for you who fear my name, and healing (will be) in its wings’. The texts echo in the later Cuthbert antiphon. In this layering of texts in the Vespers antiphon, the Old Testament prophets prefigure Cuthbert and elevate his status from a historical figure to a quasi-biblical one. The Great ‘O’ antiphon incorporates Luke 1. 78–79:

per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri in quibus visitavit nos oriens ex alto inluminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent ad dirigendos pedes nostros in via pacis.

¹⁹ The biblical texts are identified by Marbach in his edition, *Carmina scripturarum: antiphonus et responsorial*, p. 306. The biblical source texts for the words *Oriens sol iustitiae* can be traced to two prophecies of the minor prophets of the Old Testament: Zechariah and the prophet in the Book of Malachi who proclaim that the Messiah will bring divine justice to Israel. In Zechariah 6. 12, Zechariah foretells the coming of Christ as he urges the governor of Judah to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, ‘*Ecce vir, inquit, Oriens nomen ejus*’ (Behold, a man, he said, Oriens is his name). Likewise, the phrase *oriens sol iustitiae* also echoes in the Book of Malachi 4. 2, when the prophet exhorts the Israelites to keep their faith in the divine promise of salvation.

(Through the flesh and blood of the mercy of our God, He came to us rising from on high to shine on those who remain in darkness and in the shadow of death and guide our steps in the path of peace.)

Cuthbert is an intercessor between man and Christ. As an earthly beacon of Christ's presence, his soul reflects the divine. In this later variation of the Carolingian antiphon, the word of Christ comes to the world through the saint. The Carolingian Vespers antiphon is sung at Advent just as the later Vespers antiphon is sung at the vigil of Cuthbert's spiritual birthday to emphasize that Christ's birth made Cuthbert's holy life possible. In this way, liturgical reading as a form of meditation sacralizes the whole scope of human history.

The Vespers Antiphon in the Divine Office for St Cuthbert and Bede's Poetic Life of St Cuthbert

In the Office, liturgical reading involves a constant reflection on the sacred source of human history, which, in turn, inspires poetic imagination. Versified Offices, written to venerate the saints, adapt poetry into newly composed chants to enhance meditation on the holy life of the saint. Following this tradition, the Office invokes the poetry of Bede.²⁰ Bede's preface to his metrical *vita* is a verse contrafactum, a verse counterpart to the anonymous prose version of the *vita*, and serves as a spiritual commentary on the prose text.²¹ Segments of Bede's devotional poetry resonate throughout the Hours of Vespers and Matins in the Divine Office. In this respect, the Divine Office bears the selective, affective character of devotional reading that Bede introduced into the hagiography when he extracted certain narrative elements from the prose version and imbued them with figural meaning.²²

²⁰ There are three full versions of Cuthbert's hagiography, two in prose and one in poetry. The earliest prose rendition was written by an anonymous monk of Lindesfarne between 699 and 705. Bede later wrote his own prose version (*Vita Sancti Cuthberti Prosaica*) around 721. Bede's dual version (prose and verse) forms a twinned work, or *opus geminatum*. Michael Lapidge presents close studies of the highly allusive quality of the poetry in Bede's *VCM* in his 'Bede's Metrical Vita S. Cuthberti', pp. 77–93 and *Bede the Poet*.

²¹ I analyse Bede's Preface with the single antiphon in Lenz, 'Liturgical Readings of the Cathedral Office for Saint Cuthbert', pp. 5–7.

²² For a fuller discussion of the selective character of devotional reading, see Susan Uselmann's essay in this volume.

A key text in the Vespers antiphon is Bede's poetic preface, which has no counterpart in either the earlier anonymous prose version of Cuthbert's life or Bede's own later prose version.²³ The antiphon echoes the imagery of the first ten lines of the prefatory poem to Bede's poetic work:

Multa suis dominus fulgescere lumina saeculis
 Donavit, tetricas humanae noctis ut umbras
 Lustraret divina poli de culmine flamma.
 Et licet ipse deo natus de lumine Christus
 Lux sit summa, deus sanctos quoque jure lucernae
 Ecclesiae rutilare dedit, quibus igne magistro
 Sensibus instet amor, sermonibus aestuet ardor;
 Multifidos varium lichinos qui sparsit in orbem,
 Ut cunctum nova lux fidei face fusa sub axem
 Omnia sidereis virtutibus arva repleret.

(The lord granted many of his lights to shine through the ages,
 So that the divine flame would illumine the gloomy shadows of night for
 humankind from the height of the heavens.
 And although Christ Himself, born to God of light is the highest light,
 God justly caused the saints also to glow for the lamp of the church
 By Whom love will urge the senses in the teacher with fire, (that) ardor may
 kindle (his) words;
 He has scattered prismatic lamps through the entire earth
 So that new light of faith would fill all lands beneath the sky with heavenly
 virtues by its copious flame.)²⁴

This preface is a meditation on divine fire that descends from Christ to the apostles and then the saints. Its brilliance flows through their mouths as they convert nations, across centuries, spanning from Rome, Asia, India, Africa, and Constantinople into a Christian empire that reaches into Bede's own lifetime. The poetry distinguishes between the divine light (*lux*) of Christ and the earthly light (*lucerna*) granted to the saints, a distinction that the antiphon echoes. As lines 6–7 indicate, the light of the saint travels as flame into the inspired teaching of the preacher and recalls the imagery of the lamp of salvation granted that shines for the church in the antiphon. The imagery of fire may be suggested in the *VC*M with regard to Cuthbert's gift as prophet. Throughout Bede's *VC*M, he describes divine inspiration that burns through Cuthbert in the uniquely

²³ *The Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave.

²⁴ Bede's Prefatory Poem, ll. 1–10, in *Bede's metrische vita sancti Cuthberti*, ed. by Jaeger, pp. 58–60. I am indebted to Timothy Graham for his guidance in my translation of this passage.

poetic term *vates*, or prophet.²⁵ Isidore of Seville breaks the etymology of *vates* into two parts (*vi* + *mentis*) to describe prophecy as a force of the mind, an inspiration that finds expression in prophets and poets.²⁶

Perhaps most significantly, the Vespers antiphon emphasizes the saint's intercessory role by highlighting the role of the Virgin. Of the distinctions among the liturgical items in the two versions of the Vespers Office for St Cuthbert, the most significant is the relationship between the Great 'O' antiphon and the *Magnificat* chant that follows it. In the monastic version of the Vespers Office, the rubric *in evangelia*, which signifies the Gospel, introduces the antiphon.²⁷ The antiphon itself echoes the text of the final lines of the Benedictus canticle. As a newly composed chant, the antiphon is linked thematically to the canticle following it as indicated by the cues *psalmus* (song) and *Magnificat* to signify the canticle.²⁸ These two chants draw upon two canticles from the Book of Luke: the Magnificat (1. 46–55) and Benedictus (1. 68–79) to provide liturgical exegesis on Cuthbert as an earthly reflection of Christ, and England as an earthly mother bringing light to the English.

The emphasis on the Magnificat is significant because it aligns the story of the English with the story of the Virgin. The organization of the monastic Vespers antiphon and canticle echo in the order of ideas in Bede's *VC* preface. The Magnificat canticle resonates with the closing lines of the preface. According to these verses, England shares in divine light and gives birth to its brilliance in Bede's own time:

Nec iam orbis contenta sinu trans aequora lampas
Spargitur effulgens, huiusque Britannia consors
Temporibus genuit fulgur venerabile nostris,
Aurea qua Cuthbertus agens per sidera vitam
Scandere celsa suis docuit iam passibus Anglos.²⁹

²⁵ I have not found this term in the prose version in Colgrave's *The Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*.

²⁶ See Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by Stephen A. Barney and others, VII, 12.15, p. 171.

²⁷ Andrew Hughes discusses the phrase and its application to Luke in his *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*, p. 24.

²⁸ Andrew Hughes indicates that this term may refer to canticles or psalms: 'Although none of the canticles are psalms, they are poems of the same literary genre; they are performed like psalms, and are frequently introduced by the abbreviation Ps, for *psalmus*, in medieval sources', *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*, p. 24.

²⁹ Jaeger notes an allusion to the Vespers antiphon in lines 28–29 of Bede's verse 'Aurea qua

(And this radiance, no longer content in the lap of the old world, is shed gleaming across the water, and Britain, now participating in it, gives birth in our own days to the holy splendour whereby Cuthbert, an inhabitant of the golden stars, teaches the English to ascend on high by following in his footsteps.)³⁰

The description of England sharing in God's light as its *consors* conveys a Neoplatonic quality of divine light that impregnates England to give birth (*genuit*) to light by which Cuthbert converts the English. In summary, the Vespers antiphon and the *Magnificat* canticle that follows it recapture several ideas in Bede's poetic preface.

The imagery of the divine imparting itself to England signifies the conversion of the nation into a holy people in an earthly imitation of the immaculate conception. The composer of the Office for St Cuthbert uses an earlier source to form the basis of his newly composed chant in the tradition of the versified Office. The allusive quality of the highly intertextual chants collapse Advent and Lent through the Vespers *Magnificat* and Great 'O' antiphon that resound in the Cuthbert Vespers antiphon. The concept of divine conception in the *Magnificat* that will bring about Mary's liberation of Israel is refigured as nutritive fire that inspires nations towards conversion. In this way, the monastic Office perhaps prefigures the important role that the Virgin will serve in liturgical reading and meditation over the course of the next few centuries.

The Vespers Antiphon in the Divine Office for St Cuthbert and Related Hymns

The overlay of Christ as the rising sun of justice in the Great 'O' antiphon in the Vespers service for Cuthbert pairs the undivided splendour of Christ with the reflected light of Cuthbert. The Cuthbert chant recalls the biblical texts and joins them with Bede's poetry to create a description of the sun shining through a lamp, a greater light shining through an object that reflects its light. This imagistic description has a musical parallel in the treatment of the hymn *Magnus Miles* that precedes the great antiphon in the order of the service. The hymn praises Cuthbert for his miracles as he shines in the splendour of divine

Cuthbertus agens per sidera vitam/ Scandere celsa suis docuit iam passibus Anglos'; many more lines also find their echo in the antiphon.

³⁰ The translation by Michael Lapidge is quoted in Gretch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints*, p. 96.

virtues.³¹ The hymn *Magnus Miles* is set to three different melodies for hymns that praise Christ.³² As a result, the melodies recall hymns to Christ as they convey new lyrics that venerate the saint. In one setting the hymn-tune for *Magnus Miles* corresponds to the melodic setting for the hymn 'A Solis Ortus Cardine', Caelius Sedulius's hymn to celebrate Christ's presence on earth.³³ Frere identifies it as a tune sung at both Vespers and Lauds.³⁴ These liturgical hours mark the beginning and the close of day to echo the imagery of the opening verse:

A solis ortus cardine
Ad usque terra limitem
Christum canamus principem
Natum Maria virgine.

(From the point of the sunrise unto the other boundary of the earth, let us sing to Christ, the prince born of the Virgin Mary.)³⁵

These lines in Sedulius's hymn correspond to Psalm 112. 3 and the unceasing praise of the pious from east to west, from the beginning of the day to its end.³⁶

The opening lines of Sedulius's hymn would have echoed in the Great 'O' antiphon through the common image of the rising sun whose light spans the corners of the earth. Further, through its association with the Great 'O' antiphon and later adaptation in the Vespers antiphon for Cuthbert's Office, the imagery of light spanning the world would have recalled Bede's poetic preface to the *VC*M, particularly the description of saints distributing divine light through all the earth. Just as the hymn captures the movement of praise that moves

³¹ This hymn is edited with commentary and translation by Inge B. Milfull in *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, no. 61. Other editions of this hymn are contained in *Analecta hymnica*, ed. by Dreves, xi, 103; and *Hymnar und Hymnen im Englischen Mittelalter*, ed. by Gneuss, pp. 340–41. In Gneuss's edition, the hymn is presented with an Anglo-Saxon interlinear gloss.

³² I have not seen the third melodic setting used at York that Hughes identifies in his edition of the musical notation in the monastic manuscripts that Hohler discusses. The edition by Hughes appears after Hohler's analysis. See their collaborative work, 'The Durham Services in Honour of St Cuthbert', pp. 155–91, esp. p. 185, n. 54.

³³ Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns*, pp. 149–58.

³⁴ See his *Hymn Melodies for the Whole Year from the Sarum Antiphoner and other English Sources*, vii, no. 27.

³⁵ Hymn no. 31 in Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns*, p. 151. Translated by Inge B. Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, no. 44. Milfull provides the Anglo-Saxon interlinear gloss in her edition, pp. 213–14.

³⁶ As noted by Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns*, p. 151, n. 1.

from east to west, so Bede's poetic preface describes the movement of God's word through the inspired language of the apostles and saints that create a holy geography that begins in Rome and spans east before it culminates in England.

Anselm Hughes identifies another melody in which *Magnus Miles* was set as the same musical setting for texts that celebrate Cuthbert, St Gregory, and St Oswald.³⁷ This melody is a later Sarum variation on an older tune, a tune that was sung to St Ambrose's Easter hymn *Hic est dies verus Dei*.³⁸ The original hymn, also sung at Vespers, announces the coming of Christ.³⁹ Hughes's melodic transcription of both the Ambrosian original hymn-tune and its later Sarum variation reveals that the two melody lines are nearly identical, apart from the additional ornamentations of the later version. The original melody provided the setting for the hymn that praises Christ's resurrection. This adaptation of the melody from a text that praises Christ to texts that venerate the saints is important, for the later adaptations to the melodic setting form a musical form of *imitatio Christi* in their later version to venerate the saints. The later melody imitates its original setting just as the saints are an earthly imitation of Christ.

In summary, the three works — the two melodies sung to the two hymns for Christ and the text of the Great 'O' antiphon — all pair Cuthbert with Christ to remind the celebrants that Cuthbert imitates Christ through the conduct of his holy life and sets an example for them to follow in their own lives. These textual and melodic adaptations recall the message of Bede's poetic preface, that through the saint, the English may follow in Christ's path, as mandated in Luke 1. 79. These texts are joined to one another through the antiphon for Cuthbert and resonate with the hymn *Magnus Miles*.

The monastic version of the Vespers Office dedicated to St Cuthbert represents a culmination of ecclesiastical and liturgical sources from Isidore of Seville and Bede to Amalarius of Metz. These works all present some form of liturgical exegesis on the Gospel of Luke in the Great 'O' antiphon and *Magnificat* chant. This exegesis merges the resurrection of Christ with the spiritual birth of Cuthbert to emphasize that Christ continues to abide with humankind. At the same time, the chant alludes to the biblical prophets of the Old Testament to honour Cuthbert among them and legitimize his role in ecclesiastical history. To achieve these rich resonances among Cuthbert, Christ, and the Old

³⁷ Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 34.

³⁸ Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, pp. 33–34.

³⁹ The significance of the hymn is discussed further in Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns*, pp. 77–78.

Testament prophets, the antiphon chants from the Proper of Vespers layers musical, literary, and biblical texts to celebrate sacred history in the liturgical Hour.

Liturgical Time and Spiritual Geography in the Hour of Vespers

The liturgical materials used in the Divine Office — the canticles, hymns, litanies, and antiphons — were all forms of interpretive commentaries. In his study of liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England, Christopher A. Jones indicates further that the liturgy itself became an interpretive study that superseded biblical commentary: ‘liturgy did not simply replace [biblical] study but rather became itself an increasingly productive object’.⁴⁰ Yet even further, the oral and written texts were not the only subjects for contemplation of the divine. The final components of meditation are temporal and geographical signifiers of the divine author. The Hour of Vespers signifies liturgical time. The celebrants commemorated biblical and ecclesiastical events through sung performance during Vespers, an Hour uniquely suited for exploring the interdisciplinary nature of monastic meditative reading and prayer. This service, which according to the Benedictine Rule occurs at the last liturgical Hour in daylight, represents the liminal space between night and day, death and renewal. This symbolism would have been known to the monastic community that sang the chant. In his ‘Commonplace Book’, Wulfstan, Archbishop of York (d. 1023), states: ‘Vespertinum officium a noctis initio appellatum est et a stella verspertina quae oritur nocte inchoante (the Vespers Office derives its name from the beginning of night and from the star which rises at the beginning of the night)’.⁴¹ His description of the Hour follows that of Isidore of Seville, who associates the Vespers star with the star God gives to the world to guide men on the eve of Christ’s birth.

⁴⁰ Black, ‘The Divine Office and Private Devotion in the Latin West’, pp. 45–71, esp. p. 70; Jones, ‘The Book of Liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England’, pp. 659–702, esp. pp. 664–65. Further delineations between the two versions of the Divine Office can be found in Grisbrooke, ‘The Formative Period’.

⁴¹ Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190, fol. 148^v–149^r. This manuscript is part of a larger collection of manuscripts that form Wulfstan’s ‘Commonplace Book’, extracts that document clerical practices. See the *Portiforium of Saint Wulfstan*, ed. by Hughes, where the extract appears in print. For a thorough description of the manuscripts that form the ‘Commonplace Book’, see Sauer, ‘The Transmission and Structure of Archbishop Wulfstan’s “Commonplace Book”’, pp. 339–93. Wulfstan quotes Isidore of Seville’s definition throughout; see Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, Book I, chap. 20, in *Sancti Isidori Episcopi Hispalensis*, ed. by Lawson, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 113.

Following Isidore, Wulfstan states further that the star that rises after the sun sets signifies spiritual conversion following Christ's death, figured as the setting sun. For God created the star to guide men: 'decidente sole ex oritur de quo propheta dicit: et vesperum super filios hominum producere facit (it rises after the sun sets, about this the prophet says: 'indeed He causes the evening star to lead the sons of men forward')'.⁴² Wulfstan indicates further that the star signifies the Eucharist. Thus the reference to Christ's incarnation for the salvation of humanity echoes in the antiphon sung at Vespers to reinforce the liturgical Hour as a time of rebirth. In this context, the vigil anticipates the next day that marks Cuthbert's spiritual birth date.

The service of Vespers symbolizes and re-creates Cuthbert's sacred light given to the English, for Vespers is also called *lucerniam* to signify God's lamp given to men.⁴³ In this liturgical feast, the Vespers Hour and its association with the Vespers star represents Cuthbert as a spiritual guide to the English. The image of the saint as a star that reflects divine light is common in Anglo-Saxon hymns of the church. These hymns celebrate other English saints, such as Benedict, Augustine of Canterbury, Oswald, Edmund, and Dunstan as stars bringing new light to the English.⁴⁴ In the Vespers service for Cuthbert, this overlay between liturgical Hour and star signifies Cuthbert's spiritual birth through Christ's nativity, and reinforces the liminal space between human and sacred history.

The liminal space between divine and human realms is further reinforced by the symbolism of England's geography in medieval imagination. In his analysis of the spiritual significance of English geography, Sebastian Sobecki examines the powerful metaphor of the sea surrounding England and its significance as a spiritual frontier, a boundary between the earthly and divine realms.⁴⁵ Sobecki traces the earliest evidence of this view by Paulus Orosius in his *Seven Books*

⁴² This passage appears in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 190, fol. 209r in its original spelling. Wulfstan follows Isidore, who in turn freely paraphrases Job 38. 2, 'et vesperum super filios hominum producere facit'; see *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, in Isidore of Seville, *Sancti Isidori Episcopi Hispalensis*, ed. by Lawson, I, chap. 10, p. 24.

⁴³ Jasmer, p. 345, and pp. 337–40.

⁴⁴ A cursory review of Anglo-Saxon hymns reveals a long line of saints described as stars. The following hymns dedicated to star-like saints are numbered according to Milfull's edition: St Edmund, no. 153; St Benedict, no. 62; St Oswald, nos 157–58; St Cuthbert, no. 61; St Dunstan, no. 82; St Augustine of Canterbury, nos 83, 84, 85); and all saints, no. 10 (Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*).

⁴⁵ Sobecki, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature*, esp. p. 10.

of *History against the Pagans* (completed in 418 CE), and discusses how it was popularized further by Gildas, Wace, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Richard Higden, Leonardo Bruni, William of Malmsbury, and by later writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁶ Just as Cuthbert is an intercessor between human-kind and God, and the Vesper Hour a time that borders night and day, so England itself is imagined as a liminal space in the spiritual geography. As Bede's final lines to his Preface indicate, Cuthbert's birth signifies renewal for England while it aligns him with figures from the Bible to merge biblical and ecclesiastical history 'in our own time'.

Among Bede's many influences for his poetic version of Cuthbert's holy life is the Caelius Sedulius's *Carmen paschale* (425–50 CE), paired with a briefer prose version, the *Paschale opus*, to create an *opus geminatum*, or twinned work.⁴⁷ His dedicatory message to the priest Macedonius attests to the value of poetics as a form of teaching. He argues that students who would find prose rhetoric to be dull grasp and retain poetry through 'the honeyed allure of verse' which they 'receive with such eagerness of heart that by its frequent repetition they establish and store it deep in their memory'.⁴⁸ We can read the spirit of the *opus geminatum*, which twinned prose teaching with poetic reflection, in the newly composed chants of the liturgy. Just as the poetry in the twinned work integrated fresh, allusive material into the prose narrative, so the newly composed chants layered hagiographic material from the medieval period upon the biblical material of the traditional chants. Developed from the cathedral version of Cuthbert's Divine Office, the monastic Office became more elaborate as it was ornamented with further chants and its practice became a daily ritual. These expansions in practice and form heightened meditation on the life of Cuthbert, illustrating the liturgical application of *lectio divina*. As such, the Vespers antiphon of the monastic Office exemplifies the meditative tradition associated with Cuthbert, for it echoes voices from the Old and New Testaments, from Bede to the later the Carolingian church. The Cuthbert monastic Office thus produced a time and place for sanctifying the imaginative processes of reading through repetition and recollection in liturgical performance.

⁴⁶ Sobceki; See especially the first two chapters, pp. 1–47 and also p. 79.

⁴⁷ Godman traces tradition of teaching through twinned works and provides a study of its rationale throughout the Middle Ages in his study, 'Anglo-Latin Opus Geminatum', pp. 215–29.

⁴⁸ This is translated by Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity*, p. 85.

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LECTIO DIVINA AND SCRIPTURAL READING IN SYON'S VERNACULAR PRINTED BOOKS

C. Annette Grisé

The examinations of reading models in the essays for this cluster illustrate that as texts and practices circulated in and out of the monastery, so reading models moved and transformed to adapt to new circumstances and requirements. Thus audiences were exposed to multiple, adaptive models that required active engagement by the reader to make meaning in the text and to improve their spiritual living. The chapter by Karmen Lenz discusses the ways in which the Cuthbert Office encouraged the religious who performed it to make intertextual associations and read the layers of meaning embedded in the liturgical text. In contrast, Susan Uselmann's study of Love's *Mirror* shows how that text discourages its readers from seeking other authorities, requiring instead a discipline of simpleness and obedience. The texts of my essay call for a serious commitment to spiritual reading and offer a wealth of materials that can be employed in this ongoing project. In all of these examples, the active reading processes not only make available new textual materials but also illustrate new ways of engaging with such materials.

This chapter will examine Syon's participation in reinscribing late medieval vernacular reading and devotions. The texts associated with Syon Abbey illustrate the broader late medieval movement of translating Latin monastic texts and concepts into vernacular conventual and mixed-life textual cultures, which not only fostered a larger audience for spiritual writings but also brought

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monastic-based practices to the new circumstances of vernacular readers.¹ Many of the vernacular printed books that came from Syon in the 1520s and 1530s supported the reading of scriptures as part of their model of *lectio divina*: this study focuses on discussions of scriptural reading in four Middle English texts associated with Syon Abbey. Syon's vernacular spiritual writings usually treat the three-fold, late-monastic definition of *lectio divina* (prayer, reading, and meditation) that was more accessible to those who were not religious proficients and thus not trained in Latin. Much of this advice encourages reading hagiography, treatises on religious living, and passion meditations, but it also echoes early monastic models of spiritual reading in the encouragement to read scripture, the *Vitas patrum*, and patristic writings. Although these models may seem contradictory, they allow Syon texts to reinscribe and redefine the spiritual practices of reading and contemplation, thus demonstrating that multiple models of reading were necessary to address the varying circumstances of their readers. They do not offer a single, unitary model of reading; instead the texts offer practical advice, summarize patristic teachings, and address newer, pre-Reformation concepts of spiritual reading. They support monastic practices but also package traditional monastic learning with newer European ideas to bring these practices to readers outside the abbey walls.

The first text (chronologically) in my discussion is the *Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe*, first published in 1520 by Wynkyn de Worde. Although it does not explicitly identify a Syon provenance, this popular treatise (reprinted in 1521, 1523, and 1527) associates itself with Syon through its use of visual and textual references to the holy women, Catherine of Siena and Bridget of Sweden, two of the saints worshipped especially at Syon Abbey.² The *Dyetary* provides general advice on the religious life, addressed to an anonymous community of female religious. Also published for the first time in this decade is William Bonde's *Pylgrymage of Perfeccyon* (1526 and reprinted in 1531 after his death), a lengthy *summa* on the religious life, divided into seven books describing the progress to spiritual perfection.³ Richard Whitford, the self-styled 'poor wretch of Syon', also provided advice on spiritual reading in his corpus of printed texts. I will examine Whitford's *A Werke of Preparacion vnto Communion or Howselyng*

¹ See the recent online bibliography on Syon scholarship: Adams, 'SARA SYON ABBEY Bibliography, 12 July 2012'. See also the collection of essays in Jones and Walsham, eds, *Syon Abbey and its Books, c. 1400–1700*, On the men's library see *Syon Abbey*, ed. by Gillespie.

² *Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe*, STC 6833–36 (For STC see Short Title Catalogue, ed. by Pollard and Redgrave).

³ Bonde, *Pylgrymage of Perfeccyon*, STC 3278.

(1531, repr. 1537), a thematic florilegia; his translation of *The Folowyng of Cryste* (printed several times in the first half of the 1530s); and *The Pye or Tonne of the Lyfe of Perfection*, published one year after the second printing of Bonde's *Pylgrymage* and laying out a scriptural-based defence of the monastic life and a guide to religious living.⁴

Many of the works originally produced at Syon and then printed in the 1520s and 1530s for a general, devout audience were popular enough to be published more than once. Printed copies of these books were owned by members of Syon and other female religious houses, as well as by the 'pious prosperous laity' associated with these communities, including members of the royal family.⁵ A few examples will suffice: Benedictine nun Margaret Nicholson owned a copy of the *Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe*, in addition to other texts associated with this circle; *The Remedy Ayenst the Troubles of Temptacyons*, *The Fruyte of Redempcyon*, and Margaret Beaufort's *The Mirroure of Golde for the Synfull Soule* (the latter text is discussed by Stephanie Morley in this volume).⁶ The Folger copy of *A Werke of Preparacion* contains an *ex libris* notation by a Robert Lane (1531), who may have been related to the gentry Lane family of Orlingbury, Northampton.⁷ Robert Hare, recusant and book collector, owned a printed text of *The Pye or Tun* as well as manuscript copies of *The Myroure of Oure Ladye* and the Additions to the Rule of the Bridgettine brethren; the *Pye or Tun* was also owned by nuns at Syon.⁸ Finally, the copy of

⁴ Whitford, *A Werke of Preparacion vnto Communion or Howselyng*, STC 25412; Whitford, *Dyuers Holy Instrucyons and Teachynges*, STC 25420; Whitford, *The Folowyng of Cryste*, STC 23961–66; Whitford, *The Pye or Tonne of the Lyfe of Perfection*, STC 25421.

⁵ David Griffith follows Eamon Duffy in arguing that the interest in Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena in texts like the *Dyetary* comes from the circulation of related texts by the 'pious prosperous laity in England through the agency of the Bridgettine house at Syon'; see 'The Reception of Continental Women Mystics in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century England: Some Artistic Evidence', p. 110. See also Despres, 'Ecstatic Reading', p. 150, for a brief discussion of this influence. Erler, Lawrence, and da Costa have examined the ownership of these kinds of texts.

⁶ Birrell, 'The Printed Books of Dame Margaret Nicollson'. The complete list of her books can be found online: <http://thesaurus.cerl.org/record/cnp01138804> [accessed 19 May 2016].

⁷ Washington, District of Columbia, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS STC 6836. Ralph Lane — married to a cousin of Katherine Parr, Lady Maud — owned Beaver Manor in Orlingbury at this time and left it to his son, Robert Lane, a minor at the time of his death in 1540 ('Parishes: Orlingbury', ed. by Salzman, pp. 204–07; ODNB: Lady Maud Lane).

⁸ BL, MS C.69.e.1. Rhodes, 'Private Devotion in England', p. 25. She cites Blunt's edition of *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, pp. x, xx. On ownership by Eleanor Fettyplace and Elizabeth Collie, see Rhodes, 2.16, n. 33.

Bonde's *Pylgrymage of Perfeccyon* (1526) in the Pierpont Morgan was owned by the Tudor family: namely Henry VIII, his brother-in-law Edward Seymour, and Queen Mary, whose autograph signatures appear in the volume.⁹ Queen Mary's and Robert Hare's ownership attest to the continuation of this legacy into the counter-Reformation period, which, although not the focus of this chapter, is an interesting topic in its own right.¹⁰

The vernacular books produced at Syon as manuals on living the religious life are fairly consistent in their descriptions of spiritual reading. They remain faithful to the variety of monastic and scholastic sources used in their compilation. Drawing on the long tradition of spiritual counsel for religious women — from Jerome to Gerson — they also reflect more recent discussions about scriptural reading raised by the *Devotio Moderna* practitioners, humanists, and Protestant reformers. Although at first glance these texts appear to show greater attention to the discretion of spirits and lay participation in ecstatic forms of contemplation (another important issue for the day), they consistently reiterate, in the vernacular, patristic advice on the reading of scriptures: a topic of great debate in the years leading up to the Act of Supremacy and the dissolution of the monasteries. In order to make some sense of the use of this advice, I will begin by examining the parallels between patristic and monastic advice on scriptural reading with what we find in the texts produced from Syon. The second half of the chapter will look at New Devotionalist and humanist influences on scriptural reading advice.

The practice of *lectio divina* was a cornerstone of monastic reading practices. Karmen Lenz discusses the richness of this reading in the monastic Office of St Cuthbert, where those who performed the Office would see Cuthbert as an *imitatio Christi* and therefore a model for their own lives, and would equate the rise of the English nation with Mary's birth of Christ in a glorification of the Cuthbert's native land. The early monastic tradition of *lectio divina* developed from scriptural reading: the reader began by reading a biblical passage, and then would ruminate on the words of the passage, chewing them over in one's mind — and mouth — when reading them aloud. As this process continued, the reader was lifted into a higher understanding of scriptural truth, thereby

⁹ New York, Morgan Libr., MS W 14 B <<http://corsair.themorgan.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=171661>> [Accessed 19 May 2016]. Seymour's signature is as 'Lord Protector', thus it dates to after his nephew succeeded to the throne in 1547.

¹⁰ On this topic see, for example, Hutchison, 'Syon Abbey: Dissolution, No Decline', pp. 245–59 and Erler's new book, *Reading and Writing during the Dissolution*.

reaching a level of contemplation that brings him closer to God.¹¹ Guigo II's definitive explanation of *lectio divina* emphasizes both the use of multiple practices and the sweetness of this activity: 'Lectio quasi solidum cibum ori apponit: meditatio masticat et frangit: oratio saporem acquirit: contemplatio est ipsa dulcedo quae jucundat et reficit (Reading, as it were, puts food whole in the mouth, meditation chews it and breaks it up, prayer extracts its flavour, contemplation is the sweetness itself which gladdens and refreshes)'.¹² This four-fold monastic model, developed in the early Middle Ages, was bolstered by key writings like Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on the Song of Songs, and remained in practice until the end of the medieval period. The model sought a balance between spiritual progress — moving from reading to meditation to prayer and then contemplation — and the cyclical repetition of ruminating ('ruminatio') on one's reading as a means of achieving ever higher understanding and illumination. However, Duncan Robertson explains that the interdependent nature of the steps means that progress and illumination are achieved through continual practice of prayer, meditation, and reading.¹³ No steps can be removed, all are vital. William Bonde's description of the process of monastic *lectio divina* in the *Pylgrymage of Perfeccyon* follows this prescription:

The contemplative person firste must study & seke for her spirituall food of the soule, cravyng it of god by prayer. And whan they haue founde it in redyng of holy workes, they must fede therof, and chewe it agayn oftentymes by meditacion, synngyng to his glory & honour due thanks [...] lyftyng their hole hertes and mynde to god. And by holy meditacion synngyng to his glory, laude, and honour for all his graces & benefytes.¹⁴

¹¹ Jean Leclercq's seminal treatment of the subject is still the starting point: Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and The Desire for God*. There are two recent monographs from the Liturgical Press: Studzinski, *Reading to Live*; and Robertson, *Lectio divina*. See also Sterponi, 'Reading and Meditation in the Middle Ages'.

¹² Guigo II, 'Epistola de vita contemplativa', ed. by Colledge and Walsh, p. 84; Guigo II, *The Ladder of Monks*, ed. by Colledge and Walsh, p. 65.

¹³ Robertson, *Lectio divina*, p. 95.

¹⁴ Sig xl. In order to simplify my discussion here I have omitted an exhortation to practise passion meditation that occurs in the middle of this passage: 'but this song may nat be songe on the grounde/ but they must flye vp by consyderacion to the tree of the crosse of Christe/ and there by inwarde meditacion of his moste bytter passion & tender loue and charite/ withdrawe them frome the busynesse of worldly thyngs.' *Lectio domini* — reading, prayer, and meditation on Christ's life and death — was a popular practice which I mention later in this essay but is not the focus of this piece: see Gillespie, 'Strange Images of Death'.

Bonde's description restricts the practice to contemplatives, detailing the progression from study to prayer to meditation, and recalls the *lectio divina* practised in Cuthbert's monastic office, discussed by Lenz in this volume. Higher forms of contemplation are, nevertheless, left out of Bonde's description — a common enough occurrence in vernacular spiritual treatises of the period, where a three-fold *lectio divina* frequently replaces the four-fold model and its inclusion of contemplation. Nevertheless, the contemplative is not denied the slow reading required of *ruminatio*: when the reader reads the holy works he or she must 'fede therof and chewe it agayn oftentymes'. It is also seen as a dynamic, cyclical process where the contemplative moves between study, prayer, reading, singing, and meditating as they are all linked together in this associative state.¹⁵

The original practice of *lectio divina* was restricted to those trained in reading Latin and scriptural exegesis, such as the brothers at Chester-le-Street monastery in Lenz's study. While early authors favoured the scriptures, they also encouraged the reading of Church fathers and the *Vitas patrum*. Raymond Studzinski explains that in addition to scriptures monks followed Benedict's prescriptions to read other works such as 'the patristic writings, Cassian's *Conferences* and *Institutes*, lives of the desert elders, and the Rule of St. Basil'.¹⁶ Scriptural reading could be supplemented with appropriate materials that served to illuminate biblical wisdom.

An important patristic authority for Syon's community was Jerome.¹⁷ Jerome's circle of devout Roman noblewomen read Latin and the scriptures — a positive model of female learning and piety for the Englishwomen associated with Syon, as well as for the Syon nuns themselves. Jerome's advice to these women followed the patristic precepts on spiritual reading, adding (as Benedict would) the *Vitas patrum* and writings of church fathers.¹⁸ Jerome's

¹⁵ At the same time that this (vernacular) treatise opens up the model slightly in referring to the 'redyng of holy workes', not specifically referencing scripture or the gospel, the text also follows monastic practice, yet without limiting the vernacular reader to Latin spiritual works.

¹⁶ Studzinski, *Reading to Live*, p. 125.

¹⁷ Simon Wynter translated a Life of Jerome for Margaret, Duchess of Clarence, which was later printed: see Gillespie, 'Syon and the New Learning', pp. 76–77. Thomas Betson's *A Ryght Profytable Treatyse* uses Jerome's epistles as a major source. Jerome also is quoted in many — if not all — all the major works from Syon. It is notable that Erasmus published his nine-folio edition of Jerome's works in 1519: Erasmus of Rotterdam, *The Edition of St Jerome*, ed. by Brady and Olin.

¹⁸ As Robertson explains, the practice would become more common in male monastic contexts as well by the sixth century: 'it is not a breadth of reading knowledge that is sought — extension in breadth will always remain suspect — but an intensive reading that leads to appli-

oft-quoted letter to the widow Furia offers an eloquent explication of the merits of this expanded spiritual reading:

Quando comedis, cogita, quod statim tibi orandum, ilico legendum sit. De scripturis sanctis habeto fixum versuum numerum; istud pensum domino tuo redde nec ante quieti membra concedas, quam calathum pectoris tui hoc subtegmine impleveris. Post scripturas sanctas doctorum hominum tractatus lege, eorum dumtaxat, quorum fides nota est. Non necesse habes aurum in luto quaerere: multis margaritis unam redime margaritam. Sta, iuxta Hieremiam in viis pluribus, ut ad illam viam, quae ad patrem ducit, pervenias. Amorem monilium atque gemmarum sericarumque vestium transfer ad scientiam scripturarum.

(When you eat your meals, reflect that you must immediately afterwards pray and read. Have a fixed number of lines of holy scripture, and render it as your task to your Lord. On no account resign yourself to sleep until you have filled the basket of your breast with a woof of this weaving. After the holy scriptures you should read the writings of learned men; of those at any rate whose faith is well known. You need not go into the mire to seek for gold; you have many pearls, buy the one pearl with these. Stand, as Jeremiah says, in more ways than one that so you may come on the true way that leads to the Father. Exchange your love of necklaces and of gems and of silk dresses for earnestness in studying the scriptures.)¹⁹

This sketch of female biblical education is more detailed than the encouragements to scriptural reading found in the texts under discussion here; nonetheless, the value of reading scriptures is well conveyed here in the kind of metaphorical language appreciated at Syon. The prescribed reading all works towards one common purpose: the 'writings of learned men' supplement the reading of scripture, pointing the reader to 'the true way that leads to the Father'.

Richard Whitford's *A Werke of Preparacion vnto Communion* contrasts with Jerome's counsel to Furia, since Whitford's text is not interested in creating a scene of noble refinement and feminine adornment. Instead *A Werke of Preparacion* uses a model of heroic androgyny to emphasize that spiritual reading strengthens one's courage and resolve:

Ah good systers, you muste consyther & call unto mynde that men bene made of the same metall that women ben, and that amonge them some ben as faynte herted

cation in action and internalization in depth,' *Lectio divina*, p. 101. The *Syon Registrum* lists three *Vitas patrum* entries: 744, M.11; 745, M.12; and 746, M.13: *Syon Abbey*, ed. by Gillespie, pp. 217–19.

¹⁹ Jerome, *Epistola ad Furiam de Viduitate*, in *Select Letters of St. Jerome*, ed. by Wright, Letter 54.11, p. 250. Modern English translation in Jerome, *Letters and Select Works*, ed. by Schaff, Part 4.

as women. And therfore take no hede unto them. For although a bold and hardy herte do muche helpe unto the contempte and despising of deathe, yet maye you, by the examples & counsels of holy fathers, ingender and make in your selfe a more stronge boldenes and hardynesse spirituall therunto: and specially by comforte and counsel of holy scripture whiche, as a phisicyon, dothe cure the faynt & feble hertes, with draweth all vayne & fruteles cures and cares, and delyvereth the frayle herte from the delectable poysen of al worldly and fleshly pleasures, & so putteth away all feare and drede.²⁰

In this example the original female audience is exhorted to practice heroic masculinity through their reading of scriptures, the *Vitas patrum*, and patristic writings, the reading of which will 'ingender and make in your selfe a more stronge boldenes and hardynesse spirituall therunto'. The strong boldness and spiritual hardiness achieved by being nourished by male monastic reading materials creates a healthy, confident, religious person who — like her reading material — transcends gendered categories of spiritual living. This reading thus furnishes female religious with the status of honorary male found in virginity treatises and hagiography.²¹

The reference to scripture as a physician echoes John Chrysostom's advice on treating biblical reading as medicine:

Neque alium expectes doctorem: habes Dei eloquia: nullus te docet sicut illa. Nam ille quidem saepe se occultat propter vanam gloriam et propter invidiam. Audite, quaeso, vos omnes, quibus curae sunt quae ad hanc vitam omnes, quibus curae sunt quae ad hanc vitam pertinent, et parate vobis libros medicamenta animae. Si nullum alium vultis, novum Testamentum vobis parate, apostolorum Actus, Evangelia, magistros perpetuos. Si dolor acciderit, tamquam in medicamentorum apothecam aspice, illinc mali accipe consolationem; si damnum, si mors, si tuorum amissio: imo vero non aspice, sed omnia suscipe, et mente tene.

(Tarry not, I entreat, for another to teach thee; thou hast the oracles of God. No man teacheth thee as they; for he indeed oft grudgeth much for vainglory's sake and envy. Harken, I entreat you, all ye that are careful for this life, and procure books that will be medicines for the soul. If ye will not any other, yet get you at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befall thee, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take thence comfort of thy trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee; keep them in thy mind.)²²

²⁰ Whitford, *A Werke of Preparacion*, p. 76.

²¹ See, for example, Sarah Salih's opposition of militant and bridal virginities in the Katherine Group: Salih, *Versions of Virginity*, pp. 42–105.

²² Chrysostom, 'Homilie in Epistolam ad Colossenses', in *Opera Omnia S. Joannis Chry-*

Whereas many late medieval devotional treatises counsel the use of prayer and meditation to counteract grief and loss, Whytford — following Chrysostom — promotes the use of scriptural reading. Moreover, the idea of scriptural reading as a remedy for ‘worldly and fleshly pleasures’ echoes Chrysostom’s reference to scriptures counteracting the impulses of mortal sins:

Omnium enim medicinarum thesaurus diuinae Scripturae sunt; ita ut si arrogantiam extinguere opus sit, si concupiscentiam sedare, si pecuniarum amorem calcare, si dolorem despicere, si animum strenuum statuere, si patientiam firmare: hinc ansam magnam quis nanciscatur.

(The divine words, indeed, are a treasury containing every sort of remedy, so that, whether one needs to put down senseless pride, or to quench the fire of concupiscence, or to trample on the love of riches, or to despise pain, or to cultivate cheerfulness and acquire patience - in them one may find in abundance the means to do so.)²³

Scripture reading profits the soul and is a cure for spiritual ailments — for Whitford’s text the ailment is the weakness of will and a feeble heart, both of which impede the spiritual strength required of those who take religious vows. It is in keeping with the Catholic reform movement of the early sixteenth century, in which Syon took part, that the text looks backward to earlier exemplary models, in this case to an idealized, heroic monasticism supported by traditional forms of scriptural reading.

By the twelfth century, the *lectio divina* model for nuns also recommended hagiographic literature because it offered accessible models of holy living to its audience.²⁴ This prescription is followed in the Syon texts. A good example of the inclusion of saints’ lives in spiritual reading occurs in the *Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe*:

Nothyng swageth concupyscence more, nothyng putteth yll thoughts awaye better, than with the study or medytacyon of þe worde of God & holy redyng. Unto þe whiche I wolde þat ye sholde so accustome your mynde and occupy your hartes so ther upon, that whan ye go to bedde ye might fall on slepe in the thynkyng of some sentence of holy scryptures or sayntes lyues & dream of theme in your slepe

sostomi, ed. by de Montfaucon, XI (1838), pp. 451–52. Modern translation from Chrysostom, *St Chrysostom as a Homilist*, ed. by Schaff, pp. 300–01.

²³ Chrysostom, ‘Homilias S. Joannas’, in *Opera Omnia S. Joannis Chrysostomi*, ed. by de Montfaucon, VIII (1836), p. 243. English translation from Chrysostom, *Saint John Chrysostom*, trans. by Goggin, p. 357.

²⁴ See, for example, Bell, *What Nuns Read*, and Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*.

þat as soone as ye shall wake, they may cleve to your memory. And therefore, whan ye be troubled or waked by the crafte or yllusyon of youre enemy, beware of wayne thoughtes be tymes, avoydyng all dulnesse of body and mynde. And occupy you thus or else in prayers.²⁵

This passage bears similarities to Whitford's reference to 'holy scripture [...] as a physicion' quoted above, as it too advocates biblical and holy reading as a remedy against spiritual ills and directly alludes (à la Chrysostom) to scriptural reading as an antidote for concupiscence. Unlike *A Werke of Preparacion's* narrow focus on spiritual hardiness, however, the *Dyetary* offers scripture as a cure-all: for counteracting the sensual appetite, the unruly intellect, the devil's machinations, idle thoughts, and spiritual aridity. In this example holy reading is expanded to include not only the gospel — mentioned twice to emphasize its importance — but also saints' lives.

The *Dyetary's* use of Jerome's letter to Eustochium is also worth noting. Where the text paraphrases Jerome as saying, 'whan ye go to bedde ye might fall on slepe in the thynkyng of some sentence of holy scryptures or sayntes lyues & dream of theme in your slepe þat as soone as ye shall wake, they may cleve to your memory', Jerome's actual words are simpler: 'Crebrius lege et discere quam plurima. Tenenti codicem iō somnus obrepat et cadentem faciem pagina sancta suscipiat. (Read often, learn all that you can. Let sleep overcome you, the roll still in your hands; when your head falls, let it be on the sacred page)'²⁶ — we see that the *Dyetary* adds hagiography to Jerome's references to the 'pagina sancta'. The *Dyetary* brings the Jerome excerpt into its representation of the three-fold, *lectio divina* model of reading, prayer, and meditation — all working together to counteract idleness, wilfulness, and sinfulness through sharpening the focus on God's word in study, reading, prayer, rumination, and meditation. *Lectio divina* here brings the practitioner closer to the word of God. We have seen that the use of scriptures in the patristic model of *lectio divina* expanded to include reading of the *Vitas patrum* and patristic writings; Syon books also follow the late medieval practice of expanding the canon to include vernacular writings that paralleled the monastic Latin canon, such as lives of saints and other spiritual treatises. For example, the *Dyetary's* list of 'the sentences of holy scripture, þe lyfe of our sauour Jhesu cryst, & of other holy sayntes' as appropriate reading material for its audience illustrates the typical range for the peri-

²⁵ Sigs C.ii.^v–C.iii.^r.

²⁶ Jerome, *Eusebii Hieronymi*, ed. by Hilberg, Letter 22.17, p. 165. Modern translation from Jerome, *Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, ed. by Schaff, p. 28.

od.²⁷ These advice treatises revise *lectio divina* with a simple adaptation: biblical texts are still acknowledged as the primary sources for study and meditation, but scripture is supplemented with hagiography and other 'good holy bokes' which use biblical precepts as the foundation.

To sum up thus far, Syon vernacular printed books of the 1520s and 1530s drew from the entire spectrum of authorities, from biblical and patristic to monastic and scholastic sources, to present their advice on spiritual living, including instruction on devout reading. Their versions of late medieval *lectio divina* offered a consistent portrait of spiritual reading that was marketed at female religious and the pious laity, yet often included exhortations to read the scriptures. Research indicates that most late medieval English nuns did not read Latin — although there are exceptions to this rule — but were learned enough to perform their daily office, and that most lay owners of books of hours, for example, also were not *literati*.²⁸ Whereas continental readers had access to Bibles and biblical commentaries in German, Dutch, and French languages since the fifteenth century, and more recently Italian and Swedish translations were being published,²⁹ vernacular scriptural access in England was limited until William Tyndale began his biblical translations in the mid-1520s. Yet continental theology still continued to influence monastic learning in later fifteenth-century England and from there trickled down into the vernacular spiritual treatises translated and compiled by authors like the Syon brothers. This leads us to the second half of this chapter. In the later Middle Ages Reformist theologians, such as Jean Gerson and Geert Grote and his *Devotio Moderna* circle, advised female religious and devout laity on living a simple life of piety that looked back to the church fathers and Desert Fathers. As Franz Posset has summarized, the devotionalist movements of the fifteenth century fed into the monastic humanism developed in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries:

the reformers of religious orders and the monastic humanists of the early sixteenth century stand on the shoulders of reformers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, known for their 'modern devotion' (*devotio moderna*), a designation for a reform movement that started in the Low Countries around 1375 with Geert Grote (1340–84) in Deventer. Humanists like Rudolph Agricola (1443/44–1485), Con-

²⁷ Sig C.iii.1.

²⁸ See, for example, Zieman, 'Reading, Singing, and Understanding', and Krug, *Reading Families*.

²⁹ The first Italian Bible was printed in 1471, the Swedish New Testament in 1526.

radus Celtis (1459–1508), Conradus Mutianus, Erasmus of Rotterdam, and also Martin Luther, when they were still pupils, are counted among the students who enjoyed the pastoral care of the ‘New Devotionalists’, the Brethren of the Common Life. They promoted a ‘book culture’ (*Buchkultur*) and with it the Western Christian heritage of the Bible, the Church Fathers and monks, as well as the renewal of the orders and religious life in general.³⁰

In the first decades of the sixteenth century, the monastic humanism of the Syon brothers promoted this same ‘book culture’, following the Christian humanists in looking to the early Christian biblical and patristic canon, and borrowing from monastic reformers such as Jean Gerson and the Devotionalists to describe the *reformatio monachorum*.³¹ These continental movements contributed two elements pertinent to our discussion: they provided spiritual advice and pastoral care to female religious and the pious laity (also part of Syon’s mission), and they promoted the practice of non-monastic Bible reading.

The *Devotio Moderna* movement supported the study of the Bible for all devout Christians, although the originators carefully qualified their position as it developed at the turn of the fifteenth century in the Low Countries.³² By the turn of the sixteenth century, Devotionalists had combined the reading of biblical materials with a canon of patristic writings and late medieval, vernacular, devotional texts that bears similarities to what was promoted in Syon printed books.³³ Whitford’s translation of Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitatio Christi* (a key treatise of the *Devotio Moderna* movement)³⁴ follows its source in advocating scriptural reading:

If thou wylt profyete by redynge of scrypture rede mekely symply & faythfully and never desyre to have therby the name of connyng. Aske gladly & here mekely the

³⁰ Posset, *Renaissance Monks*, p. 6.

³¹ Posset sees these two strands tied together for early sixteenth-century German monastic humanists; I would argue for a similar situation in England for the Syon brothers: Posset, *Renaissance Monks*, p. 17. See also Gillespie, ‘Syon and the New Learning’.

³² On the reading of Scriptures by the Devotionalists see Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life*, pp. 273–75.

³³ See Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life*, pp. 277–78, for a summary of the ‘eclectic’ reading program of the Devotionalist brothers.

³⁴ See Von Habsburg, ‘While both translators [Atkynson and Whitford] seem to address a clerical and monastic, as well as a lay, readership, Whitford’s translation catered for the latter more explicitly. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that his text, like the *Internelle Consolation*, was printed more frequently than Atkynson’s, in *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, p. 94.

sayeng of saynts: & myslyke the nat the parables of auntyent fathers for they were nat spoken without great cause.³⁵

Included in the list of suitable reading materials are legends and patristic writings — the typical list of reading in our Syon books — all of which are to be read and heard ‘mekely’. This stance of simpleness and humility is encouraged in Syon texts as well, countering late medieval ecclesiastical anxieties about heretical writings and the *illiterati* being turned to heretical ideas in their unsupervised spiritual reading. The simple reading advocated by Geert Groote and his followers, part of the ‘anti-intellectual *cachet*’ of the Devotionalists, served a useful function in pre-Reformation England as well.³⁶ Instead of encouraging the spiritual boldness or devotional busy-ness we saw in other examples, this reference — and the text as a whole — encourages the late medieval goal of spiritual simplicity found in many of the vernacular devotional texts of the time. Jean Gerson’s view of the simple laity was influential to the Devotionalists and also to our Syon authors (he is quoted extensively in Bonde’s *Pylgrymage*):

Gerson knew that the orthodox tradition supported him in his positive appraisal of the devotional capacity of women. [...] Repeatedly in his writings, he contrasts the spiritual barrenness of theologians with the fervent devotion of simple laity, particularly women.³⁷

Gerson’s interest in simple piety is contemporaneous with the writings discussed in Susan Uselmann’s chapter: ‘Love’s *Mirror* and *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*’. Love’s portrayal of the Virgin Mary as exemplar of female humility parallels Gerson’s views of the simple, female laity. These feminized reader models were an important development for fifteenth-century piety that continued into the early sixteenth-century devotional tradition. For example, the Middle English versions of *The Folywngye of Cryste* emulate this perspective on simple readers. Although it may resemble the Protestant’s adherence to the letter of scripture (and indeed as stated above the *Devotio Moderna* was influential to Luther’s early education) this view also insists on faithfulness and humility, and thereby on an orthodox, Catholic reading of the Bible. Lady Margaret Beaufort’s earlier translation of the fourth book of the *Folywngye* and her publishing of the entire text in 1504 reinforces the reading model of the ‘simple

³⁵ Whitford, ‘Of the Redynge of Holy Scrypture’, in *The Folywngye of Cryste*, 1.5, sig vi.

³⁶ Gerrits, *Inter timorem et spem*, p. 249. Critics have shown that the Devotionalists followed after Gerson and his mystical theology, also very popular at pre-Reformation Syon, in their formulation of ‘simple’ reading: see, for example, Mazour-Matusevich, ‘Gerson’s Legacy’.

³⁷ Hobbins, ‘Gerson on Lay Devotion’, pp. 53–54.

laity' whose 'fervent devotion' made them eager for vernacular reading materials that were current and engaging.³⁸

The Syon texts concerned themselves with presenting a positive model of Catholic reform ideas, advocating Bridget of Sweden's revelation of the new vineyard. It is only in Whitford's *The Pype or Tonne of the Lyfe of Perfection* that we see a direct response to Lutheran reformers. This text directly opposes the Protestant reformers in its first book, arguing that Luther, Tyndale, and the other heretics misread the Bible when criticizing the religious life. Whitford responds by providing scriptural evidence for the Catholic view and then goes on to advise on the religious life in books two and three.³⁹

He begins his discussion of spiritual reading by advocating passion meditations as the primary subject of spiritual inquiry.⁴⁰ Many of the Syon books printed in the 1520s and 1530s make reference to *lectio domini* and some, like the *Rosary of Our Saviour Jesus*, present meditations on the life and death of Christ. The New Devotionalists centred their spiritual activities on the meditation of Christ, as Geert Grote writes:

In all things the most pure birth, righteous life, and holy death of Christ are the only true antidotes to our impure birth, perverse life, and fearful death. Let us therefore bear them about in our thoughts, words, and deeds, so that this spiritual rebirth may radiate through our lives and the life of Christ may be made manifest in our souls and bodies through the mortification of our flesh.⁴¹

Meditations of Christ were very popular in the late Middle Ages, in England as elsewhere, for their exemplary function. Whitford does not, however, limit his audience to passion meditations or texts like *The Folowyng of Cryste* but turns then to advice on biblical reading. He recommends

þe study of holy scripture to such persons as ben entred in gramer. And though they haue none entre, yet if they be vnder þe age of xliiii or xlv yeres, I wolde con-sayle them, be men or be they woman (if they be of substance, and maye applie the tyme), to gyue themselfe vnto the lernynge of theyr gramer.⁴²

³⁸ For further information on Beaufort's translation see Hosington, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort's Translations as Mirrors of Practical Piety', and *The Imitation of Christ*, ed. by Creasy. Both Stephanie Morley and Christina Carlson discuss Lady Margaret Beaufort in this volume.

³⁹ See da Costa, 'The King's Great Matter'.

⁴⁰ This period marks a shift to a newer understanding of meditation: see Robertson's discussion of Hugh of St Victor in *Lectio divina*, pp. 212–24.

⁴¹ Grote, 'A Treatise on Four Classes of Subjects Suitable for Meditation', pp. 98–99.

⁴² Sig CC.xx.^r.

The exhortation to read scripture is highly qualified here, contingent at first on having been schooled in Latin. This Catholic limitation was rejected by Protestant reformers, so it is important that Whitford prefaces his discussion by reiterating this position. Yet his use of the phrase ‘entred in gramer’ makes scriptural reading available to those who have attended grammar school, not just trained at the universities and monasteries.

Whitford takes his point further, going on to explain that both men and women can learn their grammar. Prescriptions of age apply to both sexes, but it appears that only women must be examined for their studiousness and the amount of time available to them. Nevertheless, these limitations acknowledge the intellectual capacities of non-monastically trained devout persons and encourage the development of such persons’ spiritual and intellectual abilities. Whitford’s next sentence comes to the heart of this matter:

For they may in to or thre yeres haue suche knowlege that may be sufficient to vnderstande the texte and sentence of the gospell, which I wolde euery christiane shulde vnderstande.⁴³

The Latin training will prepare the reader — in a limited amount of time — to understand ‘the texte and sentence’, the words and the meaning, of the Gospel.⁴⁴ Although Whitford carefully does not allow reading of the Bible in the vernacular, his text does recommend a two- or three-year training period to allow for reading the Vulgate. It is the meaning, the ‘sentence’, that he highlights here, and it is that which he desires all Christians to understand. Theoretically, then, Whitford supports the democratization of biblical reading; practically, however, he wants the equivalent of grammar school training for all Christians to enable them to read the Latin Bible. He can only expand the practice of reading scriptures by qualifying — limiting — it. Studying their grammar is represented as a devotional practice in the following remark:

And as unto the spendynge of the tyme in lernynge that gramer: I thinke verely they can nat spende þat tyme better, specially unto that ende and purpose, that is to say, to exclude vayne thoughts and to put the lyfe of our lorde in theyr rowmes. For by that study applied with courage: the mynde is fully occupied.⁴⁵

⁴³ Sig CC.xx.^{r-v}.

⁴⁴ See Anna Lewis’s chapter in this volume for debates about ‘sentence’ in the Lollard movement.

⁴⁵ Sig CC.xx.^v.

Whereas usually Syon books encourage vernacular readers to use the broadened canon of holy reading to use their time well (as well as develop their moral and spiritual character), *The Pye* here recommends replacing *lectio divina* with formal education but suggests that studying Latin is also a means of keeping readers' minds on spiritual matters. The ability to master Latin enough to read the Gospel is the ultimate goal but the training is represented as an important practice in its own right.

After this ideal context is described, Whitford sets out practical advice for those who have neither the time nor the inclination to learn Latin:

Those persones that can rede englysshe and have nat the meane to lerne latyne, let them be occupied moche with redynge or hearynge of good and approved workes. And unto them that can nat rede let them heare reders, and use prayer and bodely laboures. Unto suche persones as can nothyng vnderstande latyne: englysshe prayer well ordred in the commune langage is more profitable (in my mynde) than is latyne prayers.

The formulation is fairly traditional here, outlining what we would expect to see in late medieval vernacular spiritual advice books: vernacular readers should read 'good and approved workes', while those who cannot read can listen to others as well as use prayer and physical labour. It is notable that Whitford recommends vernacular prayers over rote memorization of Latin prayers as many of the Syon books spend time explicating common Latin prayers. Kathryn Vulić's paper in this volume also illustrates the high priority placed on understanding Latin prayers such as the Pater Noster and the ways in which vernacular reading could assist in Latin comprehension.

The multi-tiered reading model accounts for the widest spectrum of literacy possible: from *literati* and grammar-school-trained Latin readers to those who cannot read at all. *The Pye's* advice thus synthesizes late medieval trends on holy reading: the Christo-centric devotion popular in late medieval Europe (and also a principal practice of the *Devotio Moderna* movement), the *lectio divina* modified for vernacular practitioners, and the scripture study advocated by Christian humanists. The third — and most contentious — is sandwiched between the first two descriptions of holy reading. Yet they do not cancel each other out; instead they provide direction for a wide range of devout readers: within the range of options reading practices can be individualized according to one's time constraints and resources.

The careful attention to biblical and patristic sources of the monastic humanists resulted in many of the Syon books retaining references to scriptural reading in their discussions of spiritual reading and *lectio divina*. Vincent

Gillespie has re-evaluated the renewed use of Latin in fifteenth-century English spiritual writings, and by the early decades of the 1500s the debates about scriptural reading raised by Christian humanists and Protestant reformers brought this topic to the forefront of discussions of religious practice.⁴⁶ Much of pre-Reformation anxiety centred on misinterpreting scripture or not supporting the king's divorce and supremacy, and attitudes towards scriptural reading were more nuanced. Most of Syon's Middle English treatises on the religious life printed in this period steer away from heretical issues and instead focus on devotional practices suitable for their religious and lay vernacular audience. These texts produce revised, multiple, and individualized models of *lectio divina* that appear relevant to their audience. They offer a range of options for holy reading — adapting, expanding and opening up practices while drawing on historical monastic frameworks as well as more recent devotional trends — that support the Catholic reformist position. In this way, old ideas merge with new ideas so that reinscriptions of holy reading intervene in debates about scriptural reading and vernacular access to the Bible. While their support for the papacy and their rejection of Henry VIII's claims for divorce and supremacy were unpopular with their king and court, Syon's monastic humanism proved itself relevant for their audience in the 1530s. Their bookishness remained relevant in this period, even though it looked very different from that of the early fifteenth century. Whereas the earlier period saw the brothers supplying spiritual instruction to the sisters and keeping the monastic library for their use, in the later period the brothers disseminated patristic, early Christian humanist, and New Devotionalist ideas about spiritual reading and education in the print medium. Through their books they made scriptural knowledge and monastic practices accessible to a non-Latinate readership that was not seeking to read the Bible in the vernacular but was looking for ways to improve their spiritual life — whether it be in the cloister or the lay household.

The monastic practice of *lectio divina* had a pervasive influence on medieval reading practices, both Latin and vernacular. Although it was first conceived for a specific audience, it proved resilient enough to be adapted to a variety of circumstances. By extending the practice to non-Latinate readers within and outside the monastery and by expanding the range of reading materials beyond the Vulgate, spiritual writers used *lectio divina* as a template for religious reading practices. These practices emphasized the common goals of reading for spiritual self-improvement and identifying with a reading community.

⁴⁶ Gillespie, 'Chichele's Church', pp. 22–26.

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A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE: NICHOLAS LOVE'S *MIRROR* OF PRIVATE DEVOTIONAL READING

Susan Uselmann

it semeth to me beste that euery deuout creature that loueth to rede or here
this boke take the partes thereof as it semeth most comfortable & stiring
to his deuocion, sumtyme one & sumtyme an othere, & and specially in the
tymes of the yere & the festes ordeynet in holy chirche, as the matires bene
perteynent to hem.

Nicholas Love, *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus
Christ*, c. 1410

The essays in this section collectively emphasize the adaptability of reading models that were associated with monastic practices. As Karmen Lenz and C. Annette Grisé demonstrate in their essays, the interdisciplinary and interdependent nature of monastic reading offered a wellspring of resources for imagining and inspiring a wide range of models for devotional reading and practice. This essay examines one particular model of monastic reading, often referred to as selective, affective, or discontinuous reading, and aptly described by Nicholas Love at the end of his *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. As it had been articulated by Anselm of Canterbury in his *Prayers and Meditations*, and similarly espoused by Love's source, the early fourteenth-century Latin *Meditationes vitae Christi* by pseudo-Bonaventure, the devotional practice of reading 'sumtyme one & sumtyme an othere' was intertwined with the reader's religious status or emotional state. But the accordance of reader

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and text implied in this practice also encouraged a process of self-examination in the reader, which would acquire problematic overtones in the years leading up to and immediately following Archbishop Arundel's *Constitutions*.¹ During this time, writers such as the scribe of Julian of Norwich's *Revelations* would condemn selective reading as the 'condition of a heretique' (from *heretikos*, 'able to choose'), or, like the author of *Cloud of Unknowing*, warn readers that it could lead them into 'error' (from *errare*, 'to wander'). Mapping new registers of meaning onto orthodox practices, late medieval devotional writers highlighted the dynamic — and potentially volatile — implications of Anselm's model of devotional reading.

In this essay, I argue that in response to the contemporary climate surrounding the practice of selective, affective reading, Love redefines the process of selection as a pragmatic consideration, guiding his readers to seek meaning in the liturgical calendar and in communal worship. Love's *Mirror*, a creative translation of the early fourteenth-century Latin *Meditationes vitae Christi*, is a text self-consciously refashioned in English for 'symple creatures the whiche as chyldryn hauen nede to be fedde with mylke of lyghte doctryne' (10.29).² Much attention has been paid to the way Love reshapes his source for his readers by removing the higher stages of contemplation from the practice of affective meditation.³ In the process of rewriting his source, however, Love also creates another effect that has been little noted by scholars: he alters a model of textual navigation and selection that had long been aligned with interiority and self-reflection, creating a successful model of vernacular spiritual reading practice that lasted up to the Reformation. Remaking the practice of *imitatio Christi* at the heart of his source into a model of *convenientia* or divine harmony that is based on human frailty and intellectual humility, Love espouses a model of private meditation that does not depend on the character, virtue or religious status of the reader, but rather directs the reader into appropriate generalized reading methods and stances that promote obedience to the mediated word of God.⁴ He uses the Virgin Mary as an incarnational figure for the

¹ See Wogan-Browne and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular*.

² All citations of Love's text are from Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. by Michael G. Sargent. Middle English characters and punctuation have been normalized.

³ See Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, pp. 147–73; See also Watson, 'Conceptions of the Word', pp. 85–124; Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition*, pp. 207–36.

⁴ The *Mirror* thus in one way offers an answer to the Lollard conception of the 'right reader' (see Lewis's essay in this volume). Arundel's *imprimatur* and note that the text be published 'for the edification of the faithful and the confutation of all false heretics and Lollards'

reader, transforming her model from one of affective prayer into a generalized model of feminized piety that reinforces the communal identity of the audience. As Love defines it, a key measure of private meditation is whether it is *convenient* — a Latinate term meaning 'suitable' or 'agreeable', and used by the Franciscan author of Love's source to urge readers to synchronize their meditations with the broader religious community. For Love and his contemporaries, 'convenient' or 'covenable' prayers also referred to those that adhered to liturgical convention or suited the specific needs of the meditant. (Hilton in his *Scale of Perfection* thus points out that conventional prayers such as the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria are most 'covenable' for beginners.)⁵ As it is used by Love, however, the notion of suitable or appropriate contemplation evokes a broad range of textual and meditative practices, as well as theological and social overtones, which pervaded the networks of devotional communities that were emerging among professional religious and the social elite in the early decades of the fifteenth century.

*Love's Antecedents: Reading Selectively in Prayers
and Meditations and the Meditationes vitae Christi*

Love's suggestion to read 'sumtyme one & sumtyme an othere' part of his text draws on a model of monastic prayer that extends at least as far back as the famous prologue to Anselm of Canterbury's *Prayers and Meditations*, which had emphasized the reader's emotions rather than his/her knowledge of scripture. From at least the time of Anselm, the practice of reading selections, rather than reading *seriatim* (from beginning to end), had been associated with a personalized approach to prayer that could enable those who were less familiar with Latin letters to participate in the monastic art of meditation. Anselm encouraged the reader to cultivate an affective response to the passages, facilitated by both his heightened rhetorical style and a particular textual practice — the division of the prayers into 'paragraphs':

('ad fidelium edificaionem & hereticorum siue lollardorum confutacionem') appears in seventeen manuscripts of the *Mirror*, a fact which has prompted several scholars to see the *Mirror* as an orthodox response to the Wycliffite Bible. This essay however is not concerned with the question of whether Love's text constituted a deliberate refutation of the Lollards.

⁵ Walter Hilton, *Scale of Perfection*, ed. by Thomas Bestul, II, 19.

Meditationes seu orationes quae subscriptae sunt, quoniam ad excitandum legentis mentem ad Dei amorem vel timorem, seu ad suimet discussionem editae sunt, non sunt legendae in tumultu, sed in quiete, nec velociter, sed paulatim, cum intenta et morosa meditatione. Nec debet intendere lector ut quamlibet illarum totam perlegat; sed quantum sentit, Deo adjuvante, sibi valere ad accendendum affectum orandi, vel quantum illum delectat. Nec necesse habet aliquam semper a principio incipere, sed ubi magis illi placuerit. Ad hoc enim ipsum paragraphis sunt distinctae, ut ubi elegerit incipiat ve desinat, ne prolixitas aut frequens ejusdem loci repetitio generet fastidium; sed potius aliquem inde colligat lector, propter quod factae sunt, pietatis affectum.

(The prayers and meditations written below, since they are intended to excite the reader's mind to the love or fear of God and are uttered in conversation with him, are not to be read where there is noise but in quiet, nor superficially and at speed but slowly, with intense and profound meditation. Nor is a reader to think to read any of them all the way through, but only as much as, with God's help, will do to kindle a longing for prayer, or as much as is satisfying. Nor need anyone always begin at the beginning but wherever suits best [*sed ubi magis illi placuerit*]. For this reason, the prayers are subdivided into paragraphs, so that one may begin or end where one chooses, in case too many words or frequent repetition of the same section should lead to boredom. Let the reader take from them instead what they were meant to provide, the warmth of devotion.)⁶

Anselm is widely seen as a definitive figure in shaping affective meditative practices for those outside the monastery, but it is important to note that Anselm's text was directed at lay and monastic readers alike — a fact that is sometimes underacknowledged in studies of Anselm's impact on lay devotional practices.⁷ His emphasis on the reader's emotions notwithstanding, Anselm's approach is infused with an intellectual energy characteristic of the eleventh-century master at Bec but out of sync with early fifteenth-century concerns about the meditative practices of the laity. Anselm's verb *placeo*, for example, has a double connotation: while on the one hand it suggests that readers have the liberty to choose the selection that is more 'pleasing', on the other it assumes that they in fact *know* which passage 'suits best'. And while Anselm implies that the divisions function pragmatically to cut down on boredom and ease mental strain,

⁶ Anselm of Canterbury, *Orationes sive meditationes*, PL 158, col. 709C, trans. in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. by Wogan-Browne and others, p. 213 (as trans. from Schmitt, *S. Anselmi opera omnia*, III.3).

⁷ Anselm is considered the point of reference, although John of Fécamp is generally acknowledged to be the original author of this method. On the role that St Anselm played in revolutionizing devotional reading, see Southern, *St Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*.

he also suggests that they correlate with the reader's deep connection with God, challenging his readers to discover a highly rarefied experience of *affectus*. In asserting an accordance of reader and text, the prologue thus leaves open the answer to a crucial question which, notably, carries down to the fifteenth century: is the act of selection a pragmatic concern (intended, perhaps, to aid the novice) or does it reflect a reader who has gone through a profound self-examination and knows which passage to choose?⁸

An 'Anselmian' correlation of text and the reader was also a key feature of the selection process in Love's source, the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, which had probably been written for a Poor Clare. Thought by medieval writers to have been written by Bonaventure, the *Meditationes* was structured around the seven days of the week and canonical hours, and it adhered to the conventional assumption that meditating on Christ's humanity was particularly appropriate for the novice. Perhaps aware that his narrative was more comprehensive than those of his predecessors, the author cautions his readers that they may find it necessary to focus solely on the events of the Gospel, and to postpone higher considerations — the 'moralities and authorities' — for later in the day:

Volo autem tibi tradere modum quem teneas in meditando predict: ne si forte ipsum crederes pertinere ex extendi ad omnia que hic scripta reperies quasi molem grauem negligeres; maxime cum credam quod meditacionibus predictis unius ebdomade spacium conueniat. Igitur scire debes quod meditari sufficit solum factum quod Dominus Iesus fecit, uel circa eum contigit fieri uel did secundum formam Euangelii, te ibidem presente exhibendo, ac si in tua presencia fierent prout simpliciter anime cogitanti occurrit. Moralitates autem et auctoritates quas ad tuam erudicionem in hoc opere posui non expedit ad meditacionem adduci nisi si qua uirtus amplectanda uel uicium detestandum ipsa prima facie cogitacionis occurrat. Eligens ergo in his meditandis aliquam horam quietam, postea intra diem poteris discere moralitates et auctoritates et eas studiose memorie commendare: quod omnino te facere conuenit quia pulcherrime sunt, et que te quasi in tota uia spirituali ualeant informare. (349–50)

(Do not try to include all that you find [in these meditations] and then neglect it because it is such a weighty, shapeless mass [*molem grauem*], especially as I think that the above meditations should fit the space of one week [*unius ebdomade spacium conueniat*]. Therefore you ought to know that it is enough to meditate only on what the Lord did [a single act] or on what happened concerning Him or on what

⁸ The structure of Anselm's text relies on both liturgical and personal logic, deriving partly from the Carolingian service book, and partly from private devotional concerns. On this issue, see Ward's introduction to *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion*. For a recent reassessment, see Fulton, 'Praying with Anselm at Admont', pp. 700–33.

is told according the Gospel stories, feeling yourself present in those places as if the things were done in your presence, as it comes directly to your soul in thinking of them. The moralities and authorities [*moralitates autem et auctoritates*] that I place in this work for your instruction need not be used in the meditations, unless the virtue to be embraced or the vice to be avoided occurs of itself to your thoughts [*ipsa prima facie cogitationis occurrat*]. Therefore, in this meditating, choose some quiet hour. Afterwards, later in the day, you can take the moralities and authorities and studiously commit them to memory. It is fitting [*conuenit*] to do so, for they are most beautiful and can instruct you on the whole spiritual life.)⁹

Although clearly drawing on an Anselmian approach to meditating on Christ's humanity, the author of the *Meditationes* uses the Latin verb *conuenio* to describe the selection process — a verb with a variety of connotations that will become significant for Love's translation. Closely related to the noun *convenientia*, denoting 'consent', or 'agreement', the verb evokes an important feature of affective meditative practice by suggesting a synchronization of readerly emotion and text that is reminiscent of Anselm's prologue to the *Prayers and Meditations*.¹⁰ Like *placeo*, *conuenio* reminds readers that the scriptural passage should 'agree with' her emotional state or religious status. But where *placeo* — meaning 'to please' or 'to satisfy' — had highlighted the reader's individual affective response, the Franciscan author's verb, denoting 'to meet', 'to come together or gather', as well as 'to come to an agreement', emphasizes how this response should harmonize, too, with the broader religious community.¹¹ On one level, then, the verb denotes a decidedly practical consideration, because in bypassing the more advanced stages of contemplation and focusing solely on the events of Christ's life, the religious novice can better participate in her

⁹ All Latin passages from the *Meditationes* are taken from *Ioannis de Caulibus Meditationes vitae Christi olim S. Bonaventuro attributae*, ed. by Stallings-Taney. Stallings-Taney attributes the authorship to Johannes de Caulibus, but this attribution is still contested, and I follow here scholars like Michelle Karnes, Thomas Bestul, and Bernard McGinn, who continue to maintain the author's anonymity. The translation is derived from *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. and trans. by Ragusa and Green, p. 387. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of the *Meditationes* are based primarily on this version.

¹⁰ *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* s.v. 'convenientia', defs. 1a and 1b. The primary definition of *conuenire* is 'to come together, meet, encounter' (1a), 'to assemble for prayer or worship' (1b), as well as 'to agree, conform, be fitting or appropriate' (5a), and 'comfortable, consistent, fitting, appropriate' (6a).

¹¹ The term *conuenio* in this sense forms the etymological roots of Middle English descriptives such as *covenable* and *convenient* (as well as *convent*, *convene*, *conventicle* and *conventional*), and evokes a harmony of individual and communal identity that is characteristic of liturgically oriented texts.

community of poor Clares. What is 'fitting' or 'agreeable' in this case is a matter of communal synchronicity, of harmonizing one's thoughts with the rhythm of the canonical hours of the day and the liturgical week. This meaning of *convenio*, as we shall see, is also integral to Love's understanding of affectivity.

In the *Meditationes*, however, the verb *convenio* is also used by the author to suggest another, higher level of harmony, whereby the reader is taught 'what is fitting' for more advanced levels of contemplation. Beginners, for example, are not to complete the chapter unless their thoughts are in harmony with the subsequent discussion of patristic and scriptural authorities (that is, they should continue reading only if 'the virtue to be embraced or the vice to be avoided occurs *of itself* to [their] thoughts' ['ipsa prima facie cogitacionis occurrat']; emphasis mine). But the meditant who has sufficiently contemplated the events of the Gospel and learned to harmonize her thoughts with the 'moralities and authorities' may return 'later in the day' to complete the chapter. As the pseudo-Bonaventurean author assures her, the meditations may consist of 'seemingly childish things', but they also 'lead to greater things'.¹² The delayed meditation 'is fitting' (*conuenit*) because the moralities and authorities 'are most beautiful and can instruct [her] on the whole spiritual life'. As part of a carefully articulated program of contemplation, this harmony of the reader's emotions and the *auctoritates* emerges only upon reflection, perhaps even after years spent as a novice. For advanced religious, *convenio* refers not to a sense of liturgical timing but to a deeper, more individualized sense of harmonizing one's affective response with the way of life described by the scriptural commentators. By removing the 'diuerse auctoritis and maters', Love does not so much remove the possibility of this harmony as he does transfer it outside the text, making the matter of readerly accordance into a consultation with church authority.

Indeed, while the *Meditationes* distinguishes clearly between beginning and advanced meditants, it demands a measure of self-knowledge from both in the practice of affective reading. The author himself portrays his gospel account as a *molem grauem* — a shapeless mass through which the reader must wade if she is to fit (*conueniat*) the meditations into the space of one week — and this shapelessness is borne out in the *mise-en-page* of most of the manuscripts.¹³

¹² *Ioannis de Caulibus*, ed. by Stallings-Taney, 13:78/528a; *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. and trans. by Ragusa and Green, p. 78.

¹³ As Ghosh observes, virtually all the manuscripts are divided into rubricated chapter divisions but present the contents of each chapter as a 'solid, undifferentiated mass' in a manner that has 'close affinities with the monastic *lectio*' but which is 'irrespective of the quality of the manuscript' (Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 170).

The chapter divisions thus serve a double function: for the novice, they allow direct access to the gospel narratives, calling on her to recognize her need for meditating on the manhood of Christ. For more advanced religious, however, they allow the meditant to participate in an act of humility, since those who have mastered the ‘moralities and authorities’ may return to the gospel with a more sophisticated level of humility in the vein of *imitatio Christi*. As Robert Worth Frank, Jr points out, the ‘awareness of one’s fallible, sinful nature’ is what ‘makes humankind most like Christ, whose incarnation was the supreme act of humility’.¹⁴ Thus, as the author reminds us, even ‘the highest contemplator’, St Bernard, never renounced such ‘childish’ things as meditating on Christ’s humanity.¹⁵ From this standpoint, the *Meditationes* encourages advanced readers to humble themselves by selecting to read ‘solum factum quod Dominus Iesus fecit’, and is indebted to a Bonaventuran perspective in that, as Michelle Karnes points out, the ‘cogitating mind [...] realizes a capacity natural to it in Augustine’s theology, which locates the person’s greatest resemblance to God in his or her own cognitive faculties’.¹⁶ Artfully blurring the boundary between the novice’s humble capacities and the expert’s ability to imitate Christ, the author asserts a precise correlation of textual and meditative practice intended to reflect the status of the reader.¹⁷ For the reader of the *Meditationes* — unlike Love’s readers, as we will see below — the practice of reading selectively is thus closely linked with an act of self-understanding. When Love removes the ‘diuerse auctoritis and maters’ and excises the ‘sadde mete of grete clargye & of

¹⁴ Frank, ‘*Meditationes vitae Christi*’, p. 47. Frank distinguishes this humility from the Anselmian sort, which tends to lead to despair or ‘separation from God’, although it is my contention that the author of the *Meditationes* ultimately envisions this separation as a step toward Augustinian self-recognition.

¹⁵ ‘Non enim qui ad maiorem contemplacionem ascendunt hanc dimittere debent pro loco tempore. [...] qualiter Bernardus, qui fuit altissimus contemplator — hanc nunquam dimisit’ (*Ioannis de Caulibus*, ed. by Stallings-Taney, p. 349); *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. and trans. by Ragusa and Green, p. 387. Moreover, as the author suggests in his prologue, the *illiterati et simplices* may be, like St Francis, even better suited to recognize ‘the greatness and intensity of divine things’ [‘adeo ut plures fuerint illiterati et simplices, qui magna et probanda Dei propterea cognouerunt’] (*Ioannis de Caulibus*, ed. by Stallings-Taney, p. 9, ll. 63–64); *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. and trans. by Ragusa and Green, p. 3.

¹⁶ Karnes, ‘Nicholas Love and Medieval Meditations on Christ’, p. 391.

¹⁷ The absence of scribal marginalia and rubrication may have made the reader who ‘return(s) later in the day’ to relocate her place feel particularly humbled. Barbara Newman notes the rigour of the meditative practice espoused by the author of the *Meditationes* in her essay, ‘What Did it Mean To Say “I Saw”?’, pp. 1–43.

hye contemplacion' from his translation of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, he thus not only reshapes his source for 'symple creatures'; he also, as I will argue below, alters the contours of the selection process, rewriting the notion of *convenio* as it applies to *imitatio Christi* and had been a central feature of affective reading in the *Meditationes*.

Reading Selectively in Nicholas Love's Mirror

Love's *Mirror* is a loose translation of the *Meditationes*, written 'in English' for 'symple creatures' who 'kan not thenke bot bodyes or bodily thinges' (10.29). By his own account, Love removes the 'sadde mete of grete clargye & of hye contemplacion' as well as the 'diuerse auctoritis and maters' that had characterized the meditative program of his source, so that 'a symple soule [...] mowe haue somewhat accordynge vnto is affecion where with he maye fede & stire his deuocion' (10.28–29). The result of such revisions, as many scholars have noted, is a text that not only removes the higher stages of contemplation from the practice of affective meditation, but also seems to preclude the possibility of advanced readers altogether.¹⁸ Downplaying the reader's interiority, Love equates affectivity, lay reading, and the genre of meditations on Christ's life in general with 'the intellectually unsophisticated, the *puerile*'.¹⁹ In this way, the *Mirror* offers a model of private reading and meditation that could circulate beyond the walls of the monastery without being maligned as heresy or misinterpreted as a form of readerly empowerment.

Like the author of the *Meditationes*, Love envisions meditative reading as a matter of 'convenience', but he obscures the harmony of reader and text that had governed the logic of reading in his source. As Love himself points out at the end of the *Mirror*, the 'entent of [...] Bonauentur' has been disrupted by his translation, which is 'lengir in many parties & in othere manere than is the latyne'. Evoking contemporary orthodox arguments against biblical translation, Love implies that English is a more discursive and circuitous language than Latin, rendering the hebdomadal model of the *Meditationes* 'not conuenient' and 'tediouse' to follow:²⁰

¹⁸ See note 3 above.

¹⁹ Ghosh, 'Nicholas Love', p. 53.

²⁰ For the relationship between Love's *Mirror* and larger debates about Bible translation see Ghosh, *Wycliffite Heresy*. Also see Dove, *The First English Bible*; Batt, 'Translation and Society', pp. 123–39.

thus endeth the contemplation of the blessedde life of oure lorde Jesu the which processe for *als miche as it is here thus writen in english tonge lengir in many parties & in othere manere than is the latyne of Bonauenture*. therefore it semeth not conuenient to folowe the processe thereof by the dayes of the wike after the entent of the forseide Bonauentur, for it were to tediousse as me thinketh, & also it shulde so sone be fulsome & not in comfortable deynteth by cause of the freelte of mankynde that hath likyng to here & knowe newe thinges, & thoo that bene seldome herde, bene oft in the more deynteth. Wherefore it semeth to me beste that euery deuout creature that loueth to rede or here this boke take the partes thereof as it semeth *most comfortable & stiryng to his deuocion*, sumtyme one & sumtyme an othere, & and specially in the *tymes of the yere & the festes ordeynet in holy chirche, as the matires bene pertynent to hem*. (220.22–36; emphasis mine)

Rejecting the days-of-the-week model of his source, Love proposes in its stead a more free-form approach to liturgical reading reminiscent of Anselm's *Prayers and Meditations*, asking readers to 'take the partes thereof as it semeth most comfortable and stiryng'. Here, the need for a 'conuenient' or appropriate approach seems to stem from a particular rhetorical problem in which the readers' intellectual 'freelte' and misguided will cause them to 'hath likyng to here & knowe newe thinges'. In suggesting that his readers are motivated by a desire for novelty, Love echoes many of his contemporaries, who typically translate Anselm's term *placeo* with vernacular equivalents, such as 'lykyng', 'plesith', or 'desireth', and thereby imply that affective reading was governed primarily by the reader's own self-interest. Love's anonymous contemporary, the Carthusian at Sheen, suggests for example in his *Speculum devotorum* that the reader use the table of contents to 'rede where hym lykyth best, and that he mygthte the sonnyr fynde that he desyreth moste'. In such instances, the term 'likyng' retained the connotation of desire reminiscent of Anselm's *placeo* without necessarily replicating the incarnational poetics that had been a central feature of the *Meditationes* tradition.²¹ Likewise, when Love rejects the model of reading espoused by 'the forseide Bonauentur', he implies that to make his text 'conuenient' to his audience means he must consider what is suitable to their particular needs.

What Love creates in effect is what Elizabeth Schirmer has elsewhere called a 'layperson's liturgy for private reading'.²² Generally speaking, the *Mirror* adheres to the sequential organization of the *Meditationes*, with the table of contents and chapter divisions suggesting that the *Mirror* may be read from

²¹ In this way, as George Keiser properly reminds us, the method of reading selectively could apply equally to sacred and secular texts. Cf. Keiser's 'Ordinatio in the Manuscripts of Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*', pp. 231–47.

²² Schirmer, 'Reading Lessons at Syon Abbey', p. 356.

beginning to end, in accordance with the hebdomadal model familiar to clerical readers ('the ferst part for the Moneday, the secunde part for the Twesday'). But Love makes it clear from the start that this clerical model is not suitable for everyone, and it is perhaps best practised only by those who are willing and able:

Also not onelych the matire of this boke is pertynet & profitable to be hade in contemplacion the forseide dayes, to hem that wolen & mowen. Bot also as it longeth to the tymes of the yere, as in aduent to rede & deuoutly haue in mynde fro the bigynning in to the Natiuite of oure lorde Jesu, & there of after in that holy feste of Cristenmesse, & so forth of other matires as holy chirch maketh mynde of hem in tyme of the yere. (13.18–24)

His revision of the *Meditationes* thus heavily favours an approach that seems specifically designed for lay readers, and tailored to correlate with the liturgical seasons of the year.²³ On Monday, for example, the twelve chapters of the *Meditationes* have been streamlined to only nine, and neatly calibrated to ensure prominence of the feast days of the Christmas season, including 25 December, 1 January, 6 January, and 2 February, respectively:

Of the natiuite of oure lorde Jesu. Capitulum vj.
 Of the Circumcision of oure lord Jesu. Capitulum vij.
 Of the Epiphany that is the opune shewyng of oure lorde [Jesu]. Capitulum viij.
 Of the purificacion of oure Laydye seynt Marie. Capitulum nonum.²⁴

That audiences appreciated this correlation of the *Mirror* and the liturgical calendar is suggested by the fact that most of the manuscripts include Love's 'Treatise on the Sacrament', which, as Michael Sargent points out, rounds out the yearly cycle of feast days to begin in Advent and end with the feast of Corpus Christi.²⁵ For Love's readers, the problem of wading through a *molem*

²³ Love alters rubrics to clarify the appropriate feast day, so that a chapter entitled 'Here begins the Meditation on the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ and on His Incarnation' becomes in the *Mirror* 'the Incarnacion of Jesu, & the feste of the Annunciacion & of the gretynge'. And although omission is not characteristically a reliable source of evidence, it is notable, too, that the *Meditationes* had included such nonliturgical titles as 'the Dispute Between Mercy and Truth' and 'the Stay of the Lady at the Manger'. Indeed, Love may have been responding to a certain lack of coherence in the meditative program of the *Meditationes* which, as Sarah McNamer argues, 'registers competing affective priorities' (p. 96) that may be attributed to its readers. For McNamer's interpretation, see *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, chap. 3.

²⁴ Love, *Mirror*, p. 3.

²⁵ Sargent, 'Introduction', in Love, *Mirror*, p. 53.

grauem — and thus the importance of knowing one's own religious status, emotional state, or inner thoughts — has been virtually removed. Here, *convenio* or 'agreement' is achieved not by the reader's controlled examination of his or her interior landscape but by obedience to the sacred rhythm of the church year.

Liturgical reading among the laity could, of course, encompass a variety of experiences, but its quintessential expression was embodied in the Mass, where congregants routinely engaged in discontinuous or selective reading methods. As Peter Stallybrass points out, '[o]n a given day, the priest might lead the congregation through a complicated sequence of passages from a variety of volumes, including missals, graduals, lectionaries, psalters, and sacramentaries'.²⁶ A preference for this discontinuous approach may perhaps explain why Love at one point disrupts the sequential reading process of his source, adding an internal rubric on the Nativity of John the Baptist — a feast day typically celebrated mid-summer — in the midst of the Christmas season.²⁷ In this way, the experience of reading the *Mirror* may have in some ways resembled that of navigating books of hours or other vernacular texts that were used as service books.²⁸

It is noteworthy, too, that for Love this type of reading reinforces the role of the clerical figure who guides participants through the liturgy. Even those who follow the hebdomadal model, reading the *Mirror* sequentially, are reminded that it has been altered to suit this purpose. As Love points out at the beginning of the section on the passion:

Nota hic pretermittitur processus passionis in generali qui postea inseritur, scilicet in fine hore tercie, quia videtur magis *conueniens* ibidem. (160.38–40)

(Note: here is passed over the narrative of the passion in general which was inserted afterwards, namely at the end of Terce, because it seemed more *suitable* there.)
[Translation and emphasis mine]

²⁶ Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls', p. 47.

²⁷ Sargent also notes that Love at times downplays the sequence of the meditations ('Introduction', in Love, *Mirror*, p. 47).

²⁸ Eamon Duffy highlights the range of texts produced throughout the later Middle Ages 'to assist the devout laity to fuller participation in the Mass. [...] None of these works is a translation of the Mass, though they all contain paraphrases of some of the prayers in the outer sections of the Mass, such as the "Gloria in Excelsis" or the Lord's Prayer' (Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 118). Although the best known of these is the *Lay Folk's Mass Book*, many other types of vernacular works, including but not limited to primers, prayer books, expositions of the Mass, and *Horae*, as well as perhaps breviaries or missals, may have also been used by the laity. Such texts 'used the stages of the liturgy as triggers or points of departure' (Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 119) to enhance devotion at Mass.

Here, 'convenience' is not only a function of liturgical harmony; it also justifies the very grounds on which Love selects from and rearranges his source. *Conueniens* carries a practical rhetorical force that highlights Love's role as a pastoral figure who determines a suitable approach to the liturgy.

The matter of 'convenience' similarly justifies Love's inclusion of non-scriptural material. In the episode on the raising of Lazarus, for example, Love inserts a long discussion from Augustine on the apocryphal references to two other bodies:

And for als miche as the gospel maketh mynde of thre dede bodies reised by oure lorde Jesu fro deth to life. of the which tweyn the first, bene not spoken of specialy in this trete before. Therefore *it semeth conuenient* to this purpose sumwhat [to] touche of hem now in this place as the forseid seynt Austin doth. (123.15–19; emphasis mine)

Michael Sargent distinguishes the style of this Lazarus material from other sections of the *Mirror*, suggesting that it was originally written for another purpose, a fact which for readers may have highlighted Love's role as the pastoral figure who navigates his readers through a wide range of non-scriptural material. Indeed, Love's confidence and rhetorical urgency, his governing sense of what is 'fructuose' to his purpose and audience, provides the backbone of his scriptural ideology and as Kantik Ghosh points out, 'to this purpose it is allowable to read the Bible selectively, and to create one's own edifying (but not necessarily scripturally supported) narratives'.²⁹ In the passage on Lazarus, the inclusion of Augustinian material is pragmatic to the point of seeming almost illogical: the only reason for including the material appears to be that it 'bene not spoken of specialy in this trete before'. What is convenient or 'fitting' to the circumstances is intimately intertwined with Love's clerical authority to the point of being indistinguishable. As Nicholas Watson provocatively puts it, 'to learn [the *Mirror's*] lesson, the reader must emulate the passivity of an infant, receiving nourishment from a clerical writer who retains full control over what he dispenses and how he dispenses it'.³⁰ Participating in 'convenient' reading practices in this way becomes tantamount to adopting the position of 'childryn'.

²⁹ Ghosh, 'Nicholas Love', p. 60. For Ghosh, the governing principle of readerly 'confort' may be seen as a response to the Lollard espousal of biblical accuracy and literalism.

³⁰ Watson, 'Conceptions of the Word', p. 95. Watson's provocative reading portrays the *Mirror* as an orthodox reaction to the Lollards, and situates Love's work not as part of a linear progression in the history of affective devotional literature, but as one of several attempts to reinforce clerical authority and circumscribe lay literacy in early fifteenth-century England. Yet

Love's rhetorical positioning of his readers as 'childryn' who are incapable of higher modes of contemplation and submissive to clerical authority has been much discussed.³¹ But it is worth observing that the above note on the passion is not written in English, suggesting that Love assumes he also writes for those who possess some knowledge of Latin.³² Indeed, in spite of the *Mirror's* insistent address to 'symple creatures' — and in spite of the fact that it continued to be associated with 'the people unlearned' through the time of Thomas More — the *Mirror* seems to have appealed to a broad cross-section of society, including some of the most elite members of ecclesiastical and social circles.³³ And while the gap between ideal and real, or rhetorical and historical, audiences was not unusual in late medieval devotional literature, the unique nature of the *Mirror's* production suggests that the distance between the rhetorically constructed 'simple souls' and their elite historical counterparts may have occurred less by accident than by design.³⁴ Extant in sixty-one manuscripts and fragments as well as nine editions printed between 1484 and 1530, the copies of the *Mirror* are remarkably similar in size and layout, and contain textual apparatus that appear to reflect a certain level of 'authorial endorsement' or

notwithstanding the sublime clarity and beauty of Watson's reading, it has perhaps obscured a tension between theological and historical viewpoints that is inherent in the *Mirror* itself, and which is illuminated in Love's understanding of 'convenience'. For a recent reassessment of Watson's argument, see Bradley, 'Censorship and Cultural Continuity', pp. 115–32.

³¹ See note 3 above.

³² Some of Love's readers may have owned both the *Meditationes* and the *Mirror*, such as Cecily Neville, who left to her daughter, Anne de la Pole, a book of Bonaventure as well as 'the same in English'. This suggests that at least some among Love's audience knew Latin and did not need an English translation.

³³ On More's reference to Love, see Lovatt, 'The *Imitation of Christ* in Late Medieval England'. On the *Mirror's* broad appeal, see Meale, "oft sithis with grete deuotion I thought what I might do pleyssyng to god", pp. 19–46. Meale suggests that Love's readers may have included 'virtually every rank and degree within the higher echelons of contemporary society, from prelates, enclosed religious (male and female), and lay clergy, to earls and countesses, wealthy gentry, and members of the urban bourgeoisie' (p. 20). Several manuscripts moreover display the marks of elite ownership, and copies of the *Mirror* are associated with the abbeys of Syon and Barking (see below). Kathleen Scott has also pointed out that many copies are printed on expensive parchment and apparently designed for wealthy lay readers, suggesting that readerships who were not 'lewd' *per se* may have seen their texts as 'an indirect refutation of Lollard theology' (Scott, 'The Illustration and Decoration of Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*', p. 76).

³⁴ On the distinction between accident and design in medieval book production, see Doyle, 'Publication by Members of the Religious Orders', pp. 109–23.

'official ratification'.³⁵ Love himself was prior of the Carthusian house at Mount Grace, an order known for its attention to uniformity in the writing and copying of devotional works, but the *Mirror* appears to have been produced with an eye towards wide-scale distribution, originating not in the North but in the central Midlands, where it was 'copied systematically [...] in a single, broadly comprehensible dialect', and 'soon distributed to convents, parish churches and lay owners'.³⁶

The tension between ideal and real readers, between theory and practice, was something with which the Carthusian Love would certainly have been familiar. As Jessica Brantley has shown, the famously reclusive order to which Love belonged placed a high value on correlating private meditations with liturgical ceremony. Carthusian miscellany MS Additional 37049, for example, envisioned liturgically oriented prayers and devotions, even when voiced in solitude, as achieving 'a kind of private sacramental power, in place of the communal processions and liturgical spectacle generally missing from Carthusian experience'.³⁷ But unlike MS Additional 37049, the *Mirror* is not a Carthusian production, and many of its allusions — such as to 'Candelmas', the lay name for the feast of the Annunciation — offer an insistent reminder of the audience to whom it appeals. In this text written for 'symple creatures', rather than offering up liturgically oriented, private reading as a kind of sacramental stand-in for communal performance, Love suggests that such reading may serve to facilitate a form of common worship by encouraging shared expressions of spiritual identity.³⁸ What Love produced, I suggest, was not only a version of affective meditation that could be practised by those who were 'symple', but also a template for standardizing private devotional reading more generally.

³⁵ Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 169. Ghosh also notes the Carthusian attention to uniformity, drawing on A. I. Doyle's description of the manuscripts.

³⁶ Wogan-Browne and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 252. The editors compare the *Mirror's* dissemination to that of the Wycliffite Bible.

³⁷ Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, p. 209.

³⁸ Indeed, by the time the *Mirror* was produced, Lancastrian efforts to combat heresy and consolidate power had already begun in earnest, and under Henry V these efforts would subsequently come to focus on transforming lay approaches to private devotion into shared expressions of religious identity, often in the form of new ceremonies and feasts added to the liturgical calendar. In Jeremy Catto's words, such efforts stemmed from a theology that was practical not speculative, and sought 'an appeal to common worship, a common expression of private prayer [...] for the whole orthodox church' (Catto, 'Religious Change under Henry V', p. 105). Though reaching its fullest and most public formulation under Henry V and his bishops, these changes were already taking place in the late fourteenth century (pp. 109–10).

Models of 'Convenient' Devotion

Love's liturgically oriented method of private devotional reading is embodied in the model of the Virgin Mary, whose prayers are depicted as the *sine qua non* of appropriateness. Described as one who recites 'the song & salmes of dauid' in a manner 'most conuenyent & semlich' (21.36), Love's Virgin models for readers the means by which private reading may become a form of liturgical prayer or other expression of common worship. Unlike the author of the *Meditationes*, Love depicts the Virgin at the moment of the Annunciation 'in hire priue chaumbure [...] closed & in hir prayeres, or in hire meditaciones per-auentur redyng the prophecie of ysaie, touchyng the Incarnacion' (23.14–15). The image of the Virgin reading at the moment of Gabriel's appearance was an iconographical commonplace and a standard starting point for many books of hours, and Love adds to his source an appropriate detail that she is 'per-auentur' reading the passage from Isaiah 7:14 associated with the feast of the Annunciation. Aligning 'conuenyent and semlich' prayer with liturgically oriented readings, Love's addition would have resonated with elite lay readers such as Cecily Neville and Margaret Beaufort, who often began each day by reciting the Little Hours of the Virgin in their chambers.³⁹ Among these readers, too, the description of Mary's prayer as 'conuenyent and semlich' may have assumed overtones of gentility, and 'proper' behaviour that is 'befitting to one's social position'.⁴⁰ Mary's behaviour is thus infused with a sense of appropriateness that is both divine and human, and her unique brand of humility and obedience, which reflect the traditional virtues associated with the Annunciation, is expressed dramatically in her astonishment at Gabriel's announcement: she is left 'astoned & abashed' (24.19).

But the added reference to Isaiah, albeit commonplace in Marian devotion, suggests that Love's Virgin models a particular kind of readerly humility and piety, for if she has been perusing the passage from Isaiah — a passage that reflects perfectly her role in the narrative of divine redemption — Mary's astonishment reminds readers that she does not interpret it as a reflection of her-

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the significance of Margaret Beaufort as a reader, see the essay in this volume by Stephanie Morley.

⁴⁰ *MED* s.v. 'convenient', adj., def. 3a, 'socially or conventionally appropriate, proper; fitting, becoming, befitting one's social position'. Carol Meale points out that the image of Mary's humility, and some of Love's advice to women (such as to keep quiet, and not to 'be a gret iangler') fused religious and social dictate as it 'confused any distinctions that would be drawn between appropriate spiritual aspiration [and] prescriptive recommendations as to how their social behaviour should be governed' (Meale, "'oft sithis'", p. 42).

self. That even the Virgin does not read with an eye towards self-understanding reminds Love's audience that private devotional reading and prayer, even of Anselm's sort, is an activity separate from one's experience of affective truth.⁴¹ In a lengthy addition to the chapter on the Sermon on the Mount, Love later chastises those people who, like 'seruantes & hirede men,' envision prayer as a vehicle for expressing individualized concerns, and try to reap 'speciale mede temperel', such as 'to ouercome hir enmyes or forto be kept fro fire or watere or sudeyn deth and other bodily periles' (85.7–9). Late medieval prayers for protection or help against enemies were often personalized, particularly in books of hours where they were typically accompanied by a blank space (or *N. for nomen*), which the petitioner filled by speaking his or her name.⁴² For Love, however, such personalized prayers misunderstand the workings of the will of God, 'that alonly knoweth what is spedful to vs': if it is best for us to be spared from sudden death, Love argues, then God himself will spare us from such a thing — 'sey we neuer so many siche priuate prayeres'. Instead, Love offers the Pater Noster as individualized comfort for a variety of situations, explicating the phrase 'God's will be done' as a remarkable site of subjective interpretation: the petitioner who 'hath an inward desire to the gostly vnderstondyng therof' will find 'diuerse vnderstandyng therof most pertynent to his desire' (84.22, 29).⁴³ Love uses the Virgin as the model of a reader who, even if she found what she desired in the passage, does not reveal it. In this context, her astonishment suggests a particular approach to reading that subordinates reader's affective response to its public expression. What Love objects to here is not the notion of private prayer in itself but the notion that affective truth could be separated from shared experience.

⁴¹ This approach to affectivity has distinctly Augustinian overtones, and in fact the Virgin's surprise has an analogous episode in Book VIII of Augustine's *Confessions*, in which Alypius — perhaps best known for his instructive relapse into sensory pleasure at the gladiatorial games — sees Scripture as a vehicle to apply to himself, whereas Augustine cannot see himself in the text and thus does not finish his passage. For an analysis of the history and significance of this Augustinian notion of the reflective reader, see Brian Stock, *After Augustine*. Richard Beadle also points to the 'portentously conceived contemplative strand' that invests the moment with a 'universal, eschatological frame of reference' (Beadle, "'Devoute Ymaginacioun" and the Dramatic Sense', p. 6).

⁴² Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, pp. 32, 95.

⁴³ Ghosh, *Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 158. On Love's position on private prayer, see Sargent, 'Introduction', in Love, *Mirror*, p. 53. Love's position was most likely informed by the expanding definition of private silent prayers, or 'prayers of the heart' in the fifteenth century. See Bryan, *Looking Inward*; Saenger, 'Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages', pp. 141–73.

Rather than constituting a private conversation with God, the practice of selective reading modelled by the Virgin finds its most profound expression when harmonized with the communal practices of the church. Love acknowledges the value of personalized prayers to Our Lady and the saints, which offer comfort when spoken 'in conable tyme' (85.1), at the appropriate hour or feast day.⁴⁴ It is important to note, however, that shared communal expression, whether during Mass or at other times of day, is not tantamount to oral performance. Like the Pater Noster, these prayers are characterized by the ability to be recited 'bothe in comune & in priuate' (84.22–85.1), but as Paul Saenger has shown, by the fifteenth century the oral recitation of prayers and canonical hours had come to be seen as distracting among some writers, who 'extolled the spiritual superiority of silent mental prayer and meditation'.⁴⁵ Unlike his source, then, Love's portrayal of the Annunciation episode is followed not by Mary's conversation with Gabriel, but rather by a general reminder that readers 'do that oure lord Jesus biddeth in the gospel [...] & also that he biddeth by his ministres & be buxum to hes vikeres, that bene in holy chirch thi souereyns [...] & so lerne of Jesu to be meke in herte & buxom & then shalt thou be of his blessed peple' (25.23–28). Here, Mary's 'conuenient and semlich' prayer is conceived less as an Anselmian-style *discussio* with God than as an expression of being 'meke in herte & buxom' to God's emissaries on earth. Readers who seek to emulate the Virgin's devotional reading should thus look beyond the words of the prayer to find models of humility in shared piety.

The Virgin's unique brand of humility had important implications for the practice of devotional reading, because it reinforced communal expressions of piety that were currently being practised among religious and laity alike. Carol Meale, for instance, interprets Love's portrayal of Mary as a mirror of the reader's own activity, reinforcing a text-centred (and often female) form of spirituality.⁴⁶ The model of Mary was deeply woven into the fabric of fifteenth-century incarnational devotion, in part because, as a mirror in which to see oneself, she 'took in light and made it visible as *flesh*, fusing inner and outer, contemplative

⁴⁴ The *MED* lists 'conable' as a variant of 'covenable': 'of things, costume, behaviour, practice, environment, etc.: appropriate or suitable' (def. 1a); 'appropriate to the circumstances; morally or socially suitable; proper, seemly fit' (def. 1b). 'Covenable' itself derives from the Middle English verb 'covenen' (from Latin *convenire*), meaning 'to have a meeting, convene' (def. 1a); see *MED* s.v. 'covenable'.

⁴⁵ Saenger, 'Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages', p. 150.

⁴⁶ Meale, "'oft sithis'", p. 42.

being and bodily seeing'.⁴⁷ At communities like Syon Abbey, discussed below, the nuns' praise of the Virgin served as a focal point of their communal identity, such that, as Rebecca Krug points out, private devotional reading became similar to liturgical performance, the goal of each being to help the individual become part of the 'disciplined unity' of the church and 'assure the orthodox, and spiritually powerful, nature of their worship'.⁴⁸ This communal understanding of reading had a close analogy among circles of elite laywomen, who often convened with their gentlewomen for reading and prayer in imitation of religious communal life. Meale suggests the possibility that a reader like Cecily Neville read aloud from the *Mirror* at dinner and discussed the work with her guests.⁴⁹ Even 'in hire priue chaumbure', a lady was rarely alone, often accompanied by her chaplain or an inner circle of companions.⁵⁰ This fact alone would have underscored a sense of community and networks of 'common profit'.⁵¹ From such a vantage point, as we shall see, a reader who chooses a prayer that is 'convenient' is one who expresses her spiritual obligation to others.

The specific way in which liturgically oriented, private reading could encourage expressions of communal identity is tantalizingly illustrated by a particular manuscript redaction of the *Mirror*, owned and perhaps commissioned by Joan Holland, Countess of Kent and widow of the founder of the Carthusian priory of Mount Grace. MS Takamiya 8 provides a remarkable witness of the paths of Holland's book: Holland gave her copy of the *Mirror* to 'Alyse Belacyse', a woman about whom we know little but who appears to have favoured public expressions of devotion, and Belacyse in turn left the book to her servant, Elizabeth.⁵² In this version of the *Mirror*, Love concludes his 1200-line explica-

⁴⁷ Bryan, *Looking Inward*, p. 95.

⁴⁸ Krug, *Reading Families*, p. 172. Richard Whytford famously wrote that 'al the covent shule be of one hert, one mynde, one affection, and one felynge & assent of oure lorde. So were the disciples' (*The Pye or Tonne of the Lyfe of Perfection*, ed. by Hogg, IV, pt. 3, p. 335; cited in Bryan, *Looking Inward*, p. 88).

⁴⁹ Meale, "oft sithis", p. 37. Denise Despres, drawing on the work of Hilary Carey, also notes that '[a]lthough their reading apparently had a profound effect on their prayer lives, these women are typical of the spiritual elite of the fifteenth-century in that such reading "regulated" and "extended" private prayer as opposed to transformed prayer into action, apostolic or visionary' (Despres, 'Ecstatic Reading and Missionary Mysticism', p. 149).

⁵⁰ Andrew Taylor, 'Into His Secret Chamber', pp. 41–61.

⁵¹ See Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*. Erler defines networks of 'common profit' in a generalized sense to refer to owners and readers of books who see 'reading as an element in spiritual obligation toward others' (p. 28).

⁵² Sargent lists MS Takamiya 8 in his edition, pointing out the fol. 120^v note: 'This booke

tion of the Ave Maria with a short note in which he assures the reader that contemplation may be achieved 'more conueniently' through his approach than through the type of prayer 'byfore wryten to the Ankeresse':

Thus thinketh me may be hadde contemplacioun more conueniently aftir the ordre of the fyue ioyes of oure lady seynt marye in the forseide gretynge Aue Maria &c. than was byfore wryten to the Ankeresse as it scheweth here / Chese he that lyst to rede or write this processe as hym semeth best or in othere better manere yif he kan / so that be it one be it othere that the ende & the entente be to the worschippe & the pleisyng of oure lorde Jesu and his blyssed moder marye.⁵³

Love is aware that his prayer is one choice among many for the readers, and the way he uses 'more conueniently' suggests that a broader cultural and spiritual ideology is at stake here, in which devotional 'entente' and affectivity should be directed towards the 'pleisyng' of Christ and the Virgin. It was Elizabeth Salter who first suggested that this passage refers to the *Ancrene Wisse*, a work which offers an illuminating contrast to Love's approach, particularly given Joan Holland's own association with a French redaction of that text.⁵⁴ The early fourteenth-century manuscript, though badly burned by fire, is nicely ornamented in red and blue and its clear rubrication in the first section reveals a keen interest in the Marian prayers. Indeed, Part I of the *Wisse* has been seen as an early prototype of a book of hours, structured around the liturgy, such that the rhetorically effusive opening to the Ave prayers is notable. Beginning with a plea to the Virgin, 'Dame seinte marie', the prayers adhere to conventional enumerations of the five joys by creating a visual image of the life of Christ to provoke compassion and love in the reader. But the *Wisse* seems to encourage an even further degree of identification, using linguistic echoes to parallel the

is gyffene to Alyse Belacyse. Be the gift of Johane Countesse of Kentt' (Sargent, 'Introduction', in Love, *Mirror*, p. 116). On Alice Belasys and the ownership of the manuscript, see Meale, "oft sithis", pp. 35–36.

⁵³ Love, *Mirror*, p. 253. The addition is inserted at 31.11. A variant reading of this moment similarly states, 'and this y sey nought to that entent that as ofte as thou seist this gretynge for to sey it in this manere but whan the liketh to haue contemplacion of hir fyue ioyes & vertues byfore seyde to stir thi deuocion the more to hir worschepe & thin profite'.

⁵⁴ MS Cotton Vitellius F. vii is a French redaction of the *Ancrene Wisse* which bears the marks of Holland's ownership, including her inscription to one Eleanor Cobham who was indicted in 1441 for sorcery. The manuscript has strong affinities with Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402, apart from a few minor additions, one of which is a passage on the customs of meat-eating in different religious orders, which may have been of interest to Holland, given her Carthusian affiliations.

readers' situation with Mary's life, encouraging the readers of the text to long for a face-to-face encounter with the Virgin in heaven, as they reflect on their own fears and sins.⁵⁵ The prayer on the incarnation, for instance, evokes an image of the joys 'within' the Virgin, and links these to the comforts 'within' the reader:

Dame seinte marie pur icele grant ioie qe vous auiez *dedenz* vous en meisme cele [...] des vous rec [...] meisme cel aule [et me] faites poi tenir des cescune ioie foreine et me confortez *dedenz* et donez moi celes ioie de ciel.

(O Lady St Mary for the same great joy that you had *within* you in that same time accept my greeting with the same *Hail* and make me count every outward joy as little but comfort me *within* and send me the joys of heaven.)⁵⁶

Using parallel language and images of heavenly bliss, the first prayer opens with an identification with the Virgin that requires a meditative rigour reminiscent of Anselm's *Prayers and Meditations*. Although it is portrayed in the *Wisse* as a precisely timed liturgical performance, this type of individualized, impassioned and spontaneous prayer is, according to Love, less 'conuenient aftir the ordre of the fyue ioies'.

In contrast to this individualized approach to prayer, Love's lengthy explication of the Ave ends with a poem in which the five joys and events of Christ's life — the incarnation, Nativity, Resurrection, Ascension, Assumption — are correlated with the five virtues of meekness, chastity, faith, hope, and charity. Significantly, the poem ends not with an individual but a communal petition — 'be thou *oure* help in al *oure* nede':

Heil Marie maiden meekest
Gret of [the] angel gabriel in Jesu graciouse conceyuyng
Ful of grace as modere chast
Without sorow or peyne thi son, Jesu blessed beryng
Oure lord is & was with the
by trew feith [& byleue] at Jesu ioyful vprysyng
Blessed be thou souereynly in women,
by sadde hope seying thi sone Jesu to heuen mihtily vpste yng.

⁵⁵ This is all the more remarkable since, as Barbara Raw has pointed out, the Ave is 'the only trace of [an] emotional, individual kind of prayer' in Part I of the *Wisse*, and the only prayer that diverges from the traditional liturgical model of Anglo-Saxon monastic houses (Raw, 'The Prayers and Devotions in the *Ancrene Wisse*', p. 271).

⁵⁶ *The French Text of the Ancrene Riwe*, ed. by Herbert, p. 25/5–15; Translation based on that of Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 61.

And blessed be the fruyt of thi womb Jesus
 in euerlastyng blisse thorth perfite charite the quene of heuen gloriously
 cronyng.
 Be thou oure help in al oure nede, & socour at our last endyng. *Amen.*
 (30.39–31.12)

By the fifteenth century, affective prayers to the Virgin had developed a long and illustrious literary heritage, and Love's prayer does adhere to this tradition, using linguistic doublets ('nede, & sucour', 'feith & byleue') and familiar alliterative phrases ('maiden mekest') to achieve a heightened rhetorical style. But Love's prayer contains no trace of personal affectivity. Instead, the linguistic echoes which had in the *Ancrene Wisse* been used to evoke a connection between the life of the Virgin and that of the reader are in the *Mirror* used to reinforce the relationship between the prayer to the Virgin and the life of Christ in general. N. F. Blake's detailed study of the style of this poem reveals that the writer (whether or not it was not Love himself) was deeply familiar with the *Mirror*, since much of what is related about her life here actually occurs later in the text. He notes the poem's collocation of particular words (such as 'sorowe or peyne', 'ioyful vprising', 'maiden mekest'), and suggests that deliberate echoes of these phrases throughout the *Mirror* created a meditative stimulus to recall the Ave throughout.⁵⁷ The poem thus turns readers' thoughts not inward but outward, to the community of the church and the entire sacred narrative of divine redemption. Explications of common prayers were widespread in books of hours and other devotional works, but Love's poem provides a specific model of how the Ave, 'in conjunction with meditative reflection informed by reading, can be the occasion for a potentially endless review of religious dogma, sacred history, and individual morality'.⁵⁸ In the way the poem encourages an 'endless review' of the relationship between the Ave and the rest of the *Mirror*, it reminds readers that affective expressions of piety become even richer when shared among the community of the church.⁵⁹

The matter of 'convenience' thus may have resonated with Love's readers in a variety of ways. In the first place, it referred to the way in which a selection

⁵⁷ Blake, 'Some Comments on the Style of Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*', pp. 99–114. Blake points out for example that 'we do not find [in the *Mirror*] the expression *Virgin Mary*, for the standard expression is "the blessed maiden Marie"', p. 104. In contrast to the affective approach of the Ave, the style of the Pater Noster section is more didactic.

⁵⁸ Huot, 'Polytextual Reading', p. 205.

⁵⁹ On the way that this approach aligns with a more generalized program of literacy, see the essay in this volume by Kathryn Vulić.

might 'suit' the liturgical season, emphasizing the reader's choice while reinforcing clerical authority.⁶⁰ More specifically, 'convenient' reading referred to the way in which common prayers could themselves become a site for 'suitable' reflection, and a means to 'talk about the things of God' by reflecting on the narrative of divine redemption.⁶¹ But there is another dimension to Love's use of this term, which is not so much liturgical or devotional as it is theological. From this vantage point, the form of shared piety implied in Mary's 'conuenient and semlich' prayer is not only affective, and associated with the role of the will; it is also bound up with the unique role that reason plays in the logic of the incarnation itself. I would like briefly to discuss this theology of 'convenience' before turning to communities of readers themselves.

Like the *Meditationes*, the *Mirror* begins the gospel story with an apocryphal debate about the 'most convenient' solution to the problem posed by the Fall. The four sisters, Mercy, Peace, Justice, and Truth, gather in heaven to discuss how best to restore God's honour and save humankind. Love adheres to his source by emphasizing the 'suitability' of the Son in this task of redemption. But he invents an entirely new character, Reason, to resolve the debate. It is Reason who suggests that the Son is 'most conuenient' to the task, since He alone can effect a 'ful acorde' of the sisters:

Than seid Reson that for als mych as the person of the fadere is *propely* dredeul & mi3ty, the person of the son all wise & witty, & the person of the holiygost most benyng & godely. The seconde person semeth *most conuenient* as to the ful acorde of the forseide sistres to the *skilful* remedye of man, & to the *most resonable* victorye of the enemye. For as anentys the first, if the person of the fadere shuld do this ded for his drede & mi3t, Mercy & Pees mi3t sumwhat haue hum suspecte, as not fully fauorable to hem, & so on that other side, for the souereyn benyngnyte & gudeness of the holiygost, trewth & Ri3twisnes mi3t drede of not ful satisfacione bot to mikel mercy [of him]. Wherefore as a gude meyn euen to bothe parties, the person of the son is *most conuenient* to performe this dede thorough his souereyn witte & wisdom. (18.32–42; emphasis mine)

⁶⁰ Analysing Malcolm Parkes' conclusions about the punctuation of the Waseda manuscript of the *Mirror* ('Punctuation in Copies of Nicholas Love's *Myrrour of the Blessed Lylf of Jesu Christ*'), Ian Johnson suggests a similar conclusion: 'The lesson for modern scholars is that even in the chilly depths of an "oppressive" and constraining work [such as the *Mirror*], licensed against heretics by Arundel himself, the theological vernacular could thrive on choice' (Johnson, 'Vernacular Theology/Theological Vernacular', p. 78).

⁶¹ Riddy, "Women Talking About the Things of God", pp. 104–27.

In the way it brings about the ‘ful acorde’ or ‘ful satisfaction’ of the four sisters, Reason’s ‘convenient’ choice seems closer to the Latin *convenientia*, meaning a ‘harmony’ of the universe. But according to Reason, the second person of the Trinity is also suitable because He embodies ‘soveryen witte & wisdom’, and thus represents a ‘gude mene’ that is ‘skilful’ and ‘most resonable’. Underscoring the relationship between a ‘reasonable’ and ‘convenient’ solution, Love suggests that what is ‘suitable’ not only reflects the divine order of the universe; it also reflects a certain level of common sense. As Kantik Ghosh points out, Reason here ‘seems to stand for “divine reason” and “human rationality” at once.’⁶²

Love’s conflation of divine reason and human rationality here provides an illuminating glimpse of how his readers may have understood their position as ‘childryn’. Reason’s argument here takes its cue directly from Anselm of Canterbury’s *Cur Deus homo*, in which Anselm had sought to explain not only why the incarnation happened, but also why it *needed* to happen — that is, why God needed to assume human form when he could have restored order just as easily by using a prophet, an angel, or even a ‘sheer act of will’ (1.1).⁶³ Central to the argument of that text is the notion of *convenientia* or ‘right order’ — that is, the idea that there is ‘divine harmony’ to the universe that is preordained on the level of sacred history and individual morality.⁶⁴ For Anselm, disobedience is thus recompensed by perfect obedience; a sin originating from a woman is recompensed by salvation born solely of a woman; the violation of the tree of life is recompensed by Christ’s death on a tree.⁶⁵ Similarly, for Love, man’s folly is

⁶² Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, p. 161.

⁶³ In the history of philosophy Anselm’s argument is significant because it does not rely on Christocentric thinking to make its point; since it was ostensibly designed to refute non-believers, Anselm’s text purports to rely on reason alone to make its case. Given the contentious climate in which Love writes his translation, the value of this Anselmian approach to reason seems perhaps obvious: this premise allows him to alter the terms of Christological thinking that had been a feature of selective, affective reading in his source, and thereby alter the pseudo-Bonaventurean premise of *imitatio Christi*. In this formulation, humility is reached not in the heights of cognition but by rendering what is *convenient* to God, a ‘perfect’ obedience through subjection of our own will.

⁶⁴ Hogg, *Anselm of Canterbury*, highlights the ‘right order of things’ implied in Anselm’s term *convenientia*: ‘God did not create a completed universe. God created a universe which was made up of different parts that would, over time, develop and reach their own preordained number of completion’ (p. 170). According to Hogg, although Anselm uses other terms to describe this logic — for example, things that act in accordance with ‘right order’ are ‘true’ because they are ‘in character’ (*debet*) and ‘morally necessary’ (*oportet*) — he prefers the term *convenientia*.

⁶⁵ Hogg, *Anselm of Canterbury*, p. 168. See also *Cur Deus homo* (Anselm, *Orationes medi-*

recompensed by true wisdom; the false word of the fiend is recompensed by the true word of God; and the devil's victory over man by wicked tricks is repaid by the devil's defeat by good tricks (19.1–8). Anselm's theory of the incarnation is often called the commercial or 'satisfaction' theory for the way it emphasizes a particular form of recompense based on equal exchange: 'Whenever a human person sins and thus fails to render God his proper obedience and respect, a deficit is created, requiring satisfaction'.⁶⁶ By this logic, as G. R. Evans explains, the incarnation is less an obscure mystery of the faith than the necessary result of human fallibility.⁶⁷

When considered in this theological context, the term 'convenience' offers an illuminating glimpse into the appeal of Love's texts among the networks of 'common profit' that were emerging among religious and elite lay readers, because it suggests that a reader who adopts a 'childlike' or 'simple' stance in relation to the text may in fact be operating in harmony with the divine order of the universe. By his own account, Love proposes the practice of selective reading as a 'convenient' solution to the 'freelte of mankynde that hath likynge to here and knowe new thinges' (222.29). And in doing so, Love may indeed have been infantilizing his readers as children who are not capable of knowing God, and need the milk of mother church. But from the perspective of Reason, human fallibility may also be seen as an expression of faith in *convenientia*, conceived not as a limitation, but as a poignant re-enactment of the terms that necessitated the incarnation itself.⁶⁸ Thus, for Love's contemporaries, the 'convenience' of reading like 'childryn' may have suggested, too, a declaration of faith.

tationes, 1.30): 'For it was fitting [*oportet*] that just as death entered the human race through the disobedience of a human being, so too life should be restored by the obedience of a human being (Romans 5. 19). It was fitting [*oportet*] that just as the sin that was the cause of our damnation has its origin from a woman, so too the author of our justice and salvation should be born of a woman. And it was fitting [*oportet*] that the devil, who through the tasting of a tree defeated the human being whom he persuaded, should be defeated by a human being through the suffering on a tree that he inflicted. And there are many other things that, if carefully considered, demonstrate the indescribable beauty that belongs to our redemption, accomplished in this way'.

⁶⁶ Baumstein, 'Anselm of Canterbury', p. 36.

⁶⁷ 'Anselm thought in terms of what was "owed", and of things "having to be as they ought to be" [*convenientia*] in order for them to be "true" [...] God could not simply forgive [Adam and Eve], Anselm argues, because his own "honor" was diminished by what they had done. Could God himself have intervened? But He was not the debtor here. To pay oneself a debt that someone else owes is not to discharge the obligation of the other person' (Evans, 'Anselm's Life, Works, and Immediate Influence', p. 21).

⁶⁸ The limitations of the intellect from this perspective are reminiscent of the Augustinian

'Convenient' Reading at Syon and Barking Abbey

In the final section of this essay, I examine the abbeys at Barking and Syon, two communities of readers that are closely associated with copies of Love's *Mirror*, and which demonstrate the variety of ways in which selective, affective reading could become a declaration of faith. Reminiscent of the model of reading depicted by Love's Virgin, devotional reading in these communities was envisioned less as a personalized approach to prayer than an opportunity to express one's humility and obedience to the *convenientia* or divine order of the universe, as C. Annette Grisé has noted in her essay in this section. Although Syon and Barking differ in the particular methods they espouse, both communities reveal that the selective approach to reading has become an important means to reinforce communal identity, in the form of a shared sense of human fallibility, and could be seen to be as awe-inspiring as it was childlike.

At Syon Abbey, where the practice of selective reading appears to have been commonplace, many books were either tabbed to facilitate readerly navigation, or contained specific directives regarding the practice of selective reading.⁶⁹ The translation of and commentary on the abbey's ordinal, *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, for example, urges the nuns to select passages 'as be moste conuenyente' when reading affective literature in particular:

[y]t is expediente that eche persone vse to rede and to study in this maner of bokes, *suche matters as be moste conuenyente to hym for the tyme*. For yf eny were drawn downe in bytternes of temptacyon or of trybulacyon yt were not spedefull to hym for that tyme to study in bokes of heuynes & of drede *though he felte hymselfe wyllyng therto* but rather in suche bokes as mighte sturre vp hys affeccyons to comforte and to hope. And so is yt to be sayde *dyuersely after the diuersyte of dysposicions* that persones ar sturred wyth for the tyme.⁷⁰

Evoking the Latinate connotations of *convenio* reminiscent of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, the author implies that the reader's textual selection should 'fit' her emotional state, highlighting the egalitarian potential inherent in a method of reading that could accommodate 'the diuersyte of dysposicions that persones ar

notion of the reflective reader, as Brian Stock points out: 'Augustine agrees with previous thinkers who maintain that the mind is incapable of knowing itself in full. Yet, viewed positively, this limitation is proof that our minds have capacities that are not bound by the rules of our own thinking' (Stock, *After Augustine*, p. 56).

⁶⁹ de Hamel, *Syon Abbey*, notes that many of the books are fitted with indexing tabs; see also the famous prologue to the *Orcherd of Syon*.

⁷⁰ *The Myroure of our Ladye*, ed. by Blunt, p. 69. Emphasis mine.

sturred wyth for the tyme'. But like Love's Virgin, the reader is not expected to choose a passage that reflects herself *as is*; instead, the choice of passage should reflect who she *should be*. An anxious reader, for example, is instructed to choose a passage of comfort — even if 'he felte hymselfe wylling' or inclined to do otherwise.⁷¹ This approach to choosing selections, as many scholars have noted, demands a relatively advanced level of textual comprehension. As the author of the *Myroure* urges, 'yf ye cannot vnderstonde what ye rede, aske of other that can teche you'.⁷² Indeed, the nuns at the double monastery placed a high value on their unique textual culture, in which reading comprehension played an important role in living a holy life and reinforcing their sense of community. Likewise, it also implies a reader with a high degree of self-awareness and self-knowledge, who participates in what Jennifer Bryan has called a dialogue between 'a self and a better self'.⁷³ This understanding of *convenience* implies a gap between reader and text that would have meshed easily with Love's sense of his readers as 'childryn'. In spite of his insistent address to 'symple creatures', then, Love's text could have easily applied to clerical readers as well. Reminiscent of the Virgin who did not see herself reflected in the mirror of the text, choosing a 'convenient' passage in this context means choosing a 'better self' — a move that indicates not a correlation but a *gap* between reader and text.

Indeed for some of Love's readers, being 'childryn' who chose passages on the basis of 'convenience' may have paradoxically suggested they were even *more* advanced in the spiritual life. At the Benedictine convent of Barking, for example, where a copy of the *Mirror* was owned by the abbess Sybil de Felton and was housed for nearly a century, the nuns envisioned their intellectual limitations as a sign of great virtue and a hallmark of their communal identity.⁷⁴ Barking's rigorous approach to education has often been noted, and the

⁷¹ See, for example, Chrysostom, Homily XXXVII, John 5. 6-7: 'Jesus saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered Him, Yea, Sir, but I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool. Great is the profit of the divine Scriptures, and all-sufficient is the aid which comes from them. And Paul declared this when he said, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written aforetime for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15. 4, I Cor. 10. 11). For the divine oracles are a treasury of all manner of medicines, so that whether it be needful to quench pride, to lull desire to sleep, to tread under foot the love of money, to despise pain, to inspire confidence, to gain patience, from them one may find abundant resource'. <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf114.iv.xxxix.html>>

⁷² *The Myroure of our Ladye*, ed. by Blunt, p. 67.

⁷³ Bryan, *Looking Inward*, p. 93.

⁷⁴ As a testimony perhaps to the flexibility of Love's approach, after the death of the abbess

nuns famously insisted that each member of the community recite the liturgy in Latin even if she did not understand it. The popular fifteenth-century *Chastising of God's Children*, a text owned and possibly commissioned by the abbey (and also associated with Syon), argues that it may in fact be even 'more medeful' if the meditant does not understand what she is saying:

If yee wil aske hou ye shuln preie deuoutli in preier / whiche ye vndirstonde nat,
I answere you therto and seie that for the uertu of the wordis and youre lownesse
and obeisaunce to holi chirche, with a feruent desire upward to god aftir youre
entent, though ye vndirstonde no word that ye seie, it may be to you more medeful,
and more acceptable to god thanne grete deuocioun that ye wene ye haue in other
preuy deuociouns. (221.29–226.6)

Metaphorically positioning the readers as children, the author claims that they need neither understand the words of the prayer nor ensure that the prayer reflects their mind-set; rather, they should speak with 'feruent desire upward to god aftire youre entent'. Indeed, because this type of meditant privileges her 'lowness and obeisaunce to holi chirche' over a desire for self-comprehension, the affective force of her liturgical reading may be even more powerful than that of 'preuy deuociouns'. Reminiscent of Love's account of the Pater Noster, the author ascribes to liturgical prayer a certain sacramental power that is independent of the speaker's interior mind-set. As Elizabeth Schirmer explains, 'the lack of any connection between the virtue of the singer and the virtue of the words can even *magnify* the benefits of liturgical reading'.⁷⁵ From this perspective, a nun who highlights the distance between herself and the words of a liturgical prayer — for example, through her lack of textual comprehension — may be seen to uphold the twin virtues of obedience and humility that bind together their community.

Indeed, at Barking such demonstrations of the nun's limited intellectual capacities may not have been uncommon. The abbey's ordinal famously describes a practice of loaning books to each of the members of the community for one full year, at the end of which, in a famous Lenten ritual, the abbess would recite the name of each book-borrower to come forward:

Cumque autem unaqueque proprium nomen audierit; surgens confestim deferat
librum super tapetum quod ibi est extensum, et si ipsum totum perlegerit; inclineet

in 1419, the *Mirror* passed to the hands of Margaret Scrope and Agnes Goldwell, a gentlewoman in the household of Margaret's sister. See Sargent, 'Introduction', in Love, *Mirror*, p. 127; Meale, "'oft sithis'", p. 34.

⁷⁵ Schirmer, 'Reading Lessons at Syon Abbey', p. 360.

tantum ad crucem et redeat. Omnes qui libros suos perlegerint eodem modo ad crucem inclinent et redeant. Omnes qui libros suos non perlegerint; prostrate coram abbatisa ueniam petant, dicentes. *Mea culpa*.

(When anyone shall hear her name called out she shall rise at once and bring her book to the carpet, and if she has read the whole work she shall bow to the cross and retire. Those who have not read through their book shall prostrate themselves before the abbess and ask her pardon.)⁷⁶

The ceremony suggests a hierarchized approach to readers reminiscent of Love's own distinction between the hebdomadal and selective methods of reading: those who had read the whole book (*libros suos perlegerint*) would bow directly before God's heavenly intermediary, Christ on the cross, while those who read only selections from the book would lie prostrate before the abbess, demonstrating both their intellectual frailty and ecclesiastical obedience to God's earthly intermediary. Derived from the *Rule of St Benedict*, Barking's book-lending practice follows the Benedictine custom of encouraging reading as a routine component of monastic labour and appointing a supervisor to ensure that the books are completed. But unlike the Barking ordinal, the *Rule* had also specified that the monks' books be read in order, from beginning to end (*quos per ordinem ex integro legant*). In contrast, the nuns' ceremony appears also to accommodate those who may read selectively rather than sequentially: the verb *perlegerint* implies only that the nuns complete their books; it does not specify *how*. What is important is whether the nuns' reading reinforces their obedience to the abbess, the conventual community, and *convenientia* — God's order of the universe. In this context, the nuns found themselves each Lent prostrate before either the abbess or the altar, both powerful symbols of authority, community, and divinity. Rather than an Anselmian-style declaration of one's humble subservience to Christ, the practice of reading selectively serves as a powerful reminder of the intellectual frailty that binds together God's church on earth.

⁷⁶ *The Ordinale and Customary of the Benedictine Nuns of Barking Abbey*, ed. by Tolhurst, pp. 67–68. Translation taken from Wormald, 'The Monastic Library', p. 21. Mary Erler notes that the abbey must have had a sizable collection of books, at least fifty, in order to conduct this practice. The practice of reading selections was seen as a problem in one Middle English translation of a rule for nuns, which admonished them not to tear a leaf or quire from the book (Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p. 31). What is interesting about Barking in this light is that reading part of the book reflects a virtuous commitment to the abbess.

Conclusion

The textual cultures at Syon and Barking are suggestive of the dynamic possibilities inherent in defining readers as 'childryn' who may approach books selectively rather than comprehensively. From Love's perspective, although all readers have the potential to be 'childryn' in relation to the text, they may nevertheless demonstrate their commitment to church authority in various ways. While readers at Barking may view the act of selective reading as an acknowledgement of a life led *per speculum in enigmatē*, readers at Syon may view this 'childlike' act as a way to reinforce the fabric of their textual community. Finally, lay readers may interpret the matter of *convenio* in a more pragmatic light, with the understanding that they choose what is 'ready to hand'. Together, these communities of readers suggest that at the advent of the fifteenth century, amidst growing concerns over lay access to the Bible, the notion of 'convenient' devotional reading offered a means to uphold a longstanding and widespread method of textual navigation while remaking its spiritual and communal resonances.

Thus, although Love's approach to affective liturgical devotion upholds the authority of the church by cordoning off intellectual modes of knowing God from his 'simple and lewd' readers, it also — for lay readers in particular, who lacked the liturgical education of their religious counterparts at Barking or Syon — may have represented a meditative humility in some ways more rigorous and demanding than even the *Meditationes vitae Christi*. I have suggested in this essay that for Love's contemporaries, the *Mirror's* approach to affectivity may have been interpreted not only as an attempt to confine lay readers to a state of intellectual infancy but also as an effort to remake the existing practice of selective, affective reading by aligning it with two possible approaches to humility, the one liturgical, the other Anselmian. Anselm's strategy in the *Prayers and Meditations* had envisioned a practice of *imitatio Christi* that depended on the reader's declaration of his or her humility, fragility, and self-abasement; but in Love's reformulation, the incarnation serves less as a means for meditation than its *result*, for in selecting a passage for pragmatic rather than devotional reasons, the reader highlights her intellectual and ecclesiastical humility, and underscores the very gap between human and divine that had necessitated the incarnation itself. Expressing an Anselmian appreciation for *convenientia* thus becomes tantamount to 'perfect obedience'.

By contextualizing the *Mirror* not only as a response to the suspicious religious and political climate of the early fifteenth century but also as a response to contemporary monastic writers, as I have sought to do here, Love emerges less as a reactionary Carthusian upholding the *status quo* than as an innova-

tive writer who understood the value of vernacularizing a liturgical approach to reading that magnified the gap between reader and text. If the result of Love's revision is a more conservative approach to affectivity and its literary manifestations, then it is also a reflection of England's emerging national discourse in the fifteenth century — what Lee Patterson has called its long-term 'strategy of self-representation and identity formation' as a symbol of orthodoxy.⁷⁷ The uniformity of the manuscript tradition of the *Mirror* suggests that although Love's approach to affective meditation avoids some of the theological complexity of his source, it nevertheless allows for a less structured and more free-form model of textual navigation, which meshed easily with rapidly changing approaches to devotional texts. Indeed, on the level of material practice, Love's text helps to answer a peculiar paradox of early fifteenth-century devotion, for even while the atmosphere surrounding vernacular religious literature was becoming increasingly restrictive, it seemed to have little effect on the growing numbers of literate laity who continued to fuel the market for devotional texts during Love's time and well beyond.

All three papers in this section examine reading models associated with monastic practices and adapted for various circumstances. My essay revisits the use of selective reading practices developed in the monastery and modified for the vernacular and lay audience. I have argued that Love's *Mirror* adapts the model of *convenientia* to produce a vernacular reader who strategically adopts a stance of obedience and humility. Rather than being primarily an affective model of reading, this model encourages self-understanding and fosters connections with community. Community building is also a key concern in Karmen Lenz's chapter, which considers the liturgical performance of the monastic Office of St Cuthbert. The Office was adapted from the Cathedral Office performed by the secular canons to be used by the community at Chester-le-Street. Lenz demonstrates that the monastic Office used associations and resonances from related sources to encourage readers to adopt recollective reading practices that reinforced Cuthbert's status in the English church. Whereas Lenz reveals that the liturgy was itself becoming a significant subject of study — and Nicholas Love would agree — C. Annette Grisé's chapter returns to the role of scriptural sources, considering the adaptation of the monastic reading model of *lectio divina* for vernacular devotional texts produced by Richard

⁷⁷ Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England', p. 76. More recently, Vincent Gillespie has argued that during this period the English church sought to assert 'itself as a distinct, individual, powerful and above all ultra-orthodox player in the universal church' (Gillespie, '1412–1534: Culture and History', p. 168).

Whytford and printed in the 1520s and 1530s. Whytford's texts include advice on the reading of scripture (the original source used for *lectio divina*), advice that was often excluded from vernacular treatises. They operate on the principle of expansion instead of exclusion, broadening the range of source materials appropriate for study to include scripture, lives of the saints and fathers, and gospel harmonies, for example, and applying the practices of *lectio divina* to the full range. In sum, all three essays in this section illustrate that the creation of communities of readers who exercised similar reading practices is a key feature of the vernacular devotional tradition. What is of great interest here is that these practices were more diverse than is typically understood: although scholars today may be most familiar with the larger divides between Latinate and vernacular readers, and enclosed and lay audiences, the nuances examined by myself, Gris , and Lenz reveal a wider variety of practices within these communities, as well as an attempt to build upon the commonalities shared among readers and communities.

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PRINTING, PROPAGANDA, AND PROFIT: RICHARD PYNSON AND THE LIFE OF ST RADEGUND

Christina M. Carlson

This essay examines Richard Pynson's involvement in the early sixteenth-century print tradition and the use of models of female piety in a hagiographic work. It offers an introduction to the representations of female models examined in Stephanie Morley's and Catherine Innes-Parker's essays that follow. My essay demonstrates that the audience of vernacular printed devotional works was a varied one, and printers and authors for this audience usually had to appeal to a broader market than an individual manuscript might do. Richard Pynson's edition of *The Life of St Radegund* illustrates this broader appeal, for it presents a model of a pious married queen (like Lady Margaret Beaufort, also discussed by Morley), which resonated well with the priorities of contemporary royal women in England and the larger concerns of an audience of lay readers.

Among the many significant works he produced in his capacity as Printer to the King, Richard Pynson printed an edition of the anonymous English life of St Radegund. This brief vernacular life of the sixth-century Frankish queen, extant in only two surviving copies,¹ may at first seem an odd choice given Pynson's prominent political role; Radegund was not an English saint, nor did

¹ San Marino, California, Huntington Library, MS 31246, and Cambridge, Jesus College, no shelf mark.

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she enjoy a large or active cult in England in the early sixteenth century.² It has been suggested that, as a Norman, Pynson may have had a personal affinity for St Radegund, since she was a popular saint in that region.³ However, I suggest that Pynson's choice is not as odd as it may appear on the surface, nor is it merely a pious gesture towards his native land. Rather, it reflects his professional priorities in microcosm, illustrating his engagement with not only male monastic sources but also the female communities and households to which these sources and their printed versions can be linked. Catering to the market for vernacular devotional books, Pynson used the life of a woman saint (patroness of a recently dissolved Benedictine female community) to appeal not only to a general female audience but also to his female patrons in the royal family. I will begin with an overview of the overlapping contexts of Pynson's professional life, in particular, the collaborations that marked his career, before turning to a discussion of his promotion of the early Tudor monarchs and his concern with the market for vernacular devotional works. I argue that his association with Lady Margaret Beaufort, as well as his printing of texts celebrating the royal marriages of her grandchildren, influenced his representations of Radegund, herself a married queen who lived a life of piety. The English life of Radegund thus represents a point of intersection for Pynson's interests in patronage, politics, and profit and, by extension, reflects the wider world of print culture in the early sixteenth century.

Pynson, Printer to the King

Because Richard Pynson attained a position of some prominence professionally, his life and career are fairly well documented. He was a Norman by birth.⁴

² See Brittain, *Saint Radegund*, pp. 62–67; Gray, *Priory of Saint Radegund, Cambridge*, p. 14 n. 3; Gray and Brittain, *History of Jesus College, Cambridge*, p. 7; Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, II, 487–91; Binns, *Dedications of Monastic Houses*, p. 167; and Van Houts, 'Nuns and Goldsmiths', p. 74 n. 72.

³ *The Lyfe of Saynt Radegunde*, ed. by Brittain, p. ix. This article cites the original 1926 edition; as this article went to press, Cambridge University Press was reprinting Brittain's edition.

⁴ In *Early Printed Books*, Duff asserts that Pynson received his 'patent of naturalisation' in 1513 (p. 166), but later contradicts this in *A Century of the English Book Trade*, stating that it was his son, Richard the younger, who takes letters of denization in that same year (p. 126). Duff makes this later argument based on the notion that Pynson would not have been named Printer to the King without such documentation. Johnston addresses this confusion, noting that the patent of naturalization, no longer extant, was supposedly dated 1493 and likely referred to the elder Pynson, while the Richard Pynson named in the extant 1513 letter of denization was

There is evidence that he attended the University of Paris in 1464, which would place his birth around 1449/50.⁵ Although there is no record of exactly when he left France, Pynson was living and working in England as early as 1482, in the parish of St Clement Danes, as a glover.⁶ He began his printing career in about 1490 out of a shop located in the Strand, outside the Temple Bar. After acquiring the press, bindery, and stock of William de Machlinia, who ran the first printing press established in the City of London,⁷ he produced his first book late in 1492.⁸ By the beginning of 1500, he had moved to the City of London and the shop he would occupy for the rest of his career, at the sign of the George in Fleet Street, near the Inns of Court.⁹

In 1506 Pynson succeeded William Faques as Printer to the King, becoming only the second person ever to hold that title.¹⁰ He held the position until retiring shortly before his death in 1529. In the four decades of his career as a printer, Pynson produced about four hundred books.¹¹ In comparison to Wynkyn de Worde's popular output, Pynson's official position meant that his output was more serious and learned in nature, and in his official capacity as Printer to the King, Pynson produced works that reflected the early Tudor monarchs' use of the press as a propagandist tool, including a range of publications from statutes and proclamations to indulgences and humanist works and such historically significant works as Henry VIII's *Assertio septum sacramentorum adversus Martinum Luthurum*.¹²

probably the son; see Johnston, 'A Study of the Career and Literary Publications of Richard Pynson', p. 1.

⁵ Duff, *A Century of the English Book Trade*, p. 126; Johnston, 'A Study of the Career and Literary Publications of Richard Pynson', p. 1.

⁶ Johnston, 'Study', p. 3.

⁷ Johnston, 'Study', p. 9.

⁸ Johnston, 'Study', p. 26.

⁹ Johnston, 'Study', p. 54.

¹⁰ Johnston offers 1507 as the date of Pynson's appointment (p. 83), while Duff, in *A Century of the English Book Trade*, suggests 1508 (p. 127). Steinberg puts it as late as 1509 (see Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, p. 49). Pamela Neville addresses these discrepancies, citing the 1506 edition of the *Expositio hymnorum* as the first text in which Pynson uses the title *regius impressor*, in Neville, 'Richard Pynson, King's Printer', p. 34.

¹¹ Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, p. 49. Steinberg also notes that between them, Pynson and de Worde printed two-thirds of all English books from 1490 to 1530 (p. 49). See also *Hand-Lists of English Printers*, ed. by Duff, Promer, and Proctor.

¹² Neville, 'Richard Pynson, King's Printer', p. 12.

Apart from his work as Printer to the King, Pynson was also a businessman who seems to have been attuned to the market forces of his day. His main publishing interest was in the legal sphere, although he also produced literary and educational works.¹³ He held a monopoly on the sale of law books, not only to professional lawyers but also to justices of the peace and lords of the manor; he probably acquired this monopoly when he took over Machlinia's business.¹⁴ Both his shops, first near Temple Bar and then near the Inns of Court, were strategically located to cater to a clientele that was professionally and socially, as well as perhaps spiritually, ambitious.¹⁵ More to our purpose we can see Pynson responding to the growing market for lay devotional texts in his printing of works such as his 1516/17 edition of *Kalendre of the new legende of Englande*. The three tracts which comprise this anthology are clearly aimed at a devout lay market and share the theme of domestic piety: *New legende of Englande* (an English translation of the *Nova Legenda Anglie*); a life of St Bridget of Sweden written for those in 'matrymony or in the estate of wydowhood'; and *A deuoute boke*, an edition of Walter Hilton's *Mixed Life*. Although Hilton's treatise was bound into the volume published in 1516/17, Pynson actually printed it in 1506, suggesting both that the market for such works had increased in just ten years and that Pynson was responsive to such demand, reissuing the original unsold work in a new context and earning a return on his initial outlay.¹⁶

In addition to the more political and/or profitable aspects of his work, one quality that distinguishes Pynson's career is his penchant for long-term collaborative relationships with a number of his authors, which themselves often proved to be both politically and financially advantageous. In fact, Pynson may have come into his role as the king's printer through his relationships with powerful figures such as Bishop Richard Fox and Margaret Beaufort, the king's mother, both of whom were prominent figures in early Tudor government and may have influenced the government's printing policy after Henry VII's accession to the throne in 1485.¹⁷ The products of these collaborations, such as Pynson's reprint of Beaufort's translation of Thomas à Kempis's the *Imitation of*

¹³ Johnston, 'Study', p. iii.

¹⁴ Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, p. 48; Johnston, 'Study', p. 9.

¹⁵ The expression is a reference to Rice, 'Spiritual Ambition and the Translation of the Cloister', pp. 222–60.

¹⁶ Collett, *Female Monastic Life in Early Tudor England*, pp. 20–21.

¹⁷ Pamela Neville has suggested that Henry VII may have been moved 'not merely by [Pynson's] qualifications, but also by the printer's connections at court, which were quite extensive, if unconventional' (Neville, 'Pynson', pp. 27, 34).

Christ in 1517, well after the death of his royal patroness in 1509, may be seen as a combination of both the printer's ongoing respect for his royal patrons as well as a manifestation of his shrewd interest in the market for vernacular devotional works.¹⁸

Understood in this larger context, the English life of St Radegund reflects Pynson's professional relationship with his patrons as well as the popularity of vernacular devotional literature. In its focus on a noblewoman whose sanctity spanned both her married and religious lives, it reflects the propagandistic goals of the Tudor monarchy as well as the real life of one of its own family members, Margaret Beaufort. Additionally, it is consistent with the tastes of an expanding lay reading public who were eager for works that expressed and enhanced their devotional experience — especially works of feminine piety — and who were also willing to pay for printed editions of them. In this way, then, the brief life of a foreign female saint may actually be read as representative of both Pynson's career as Printer to the King and of the larger cultural forces at work in early sixteenth century England, forces which are in turn reflected in the popularity of the devotional literature printed and read at the time.

Henry Bradshaw and Pynson's Monastic Collaborations

The *Life of Radegund* is the product not only of Pynson's collaborative relationships with his patrons and readers but also with the producers of vernacular devotional literature (both men and women). One notable example of Pynson's professional collaborations is his fifteen-year relationship with Alexander Barclay, which began in 1508/09, about the same time that Pynson became Printer to the King. David Carlson has noted that, with only one exception, it was Pynson who produced first editions of all Barclay's works, including his saints' lives and translations of Italian humanist writers; Pynson even used a special presentation woodcut depicting a black monk to individuate Barclay's work, and also developed a bilingual layout specifically for the monastic author's translations.¹⁹ Carlson considers this collaborative relationship to be exceptional because of the risks Pynson was willing to take: it represented a potential conflict of interest with his political obligations, and though printers

¹⁸ Pynson's original 1504 edition of à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, translated by Beaufort and William Atkinson, was made for her personal use and distribution.

¹⁹ Carlson, 'Alexander Barclay and Richard Pynson', pp. 283–302.

were primarily driven by market viability, it reveals that Pynson, who did not always make money on Barclay's work, was not solely motivated by profit.²⁰

This relationship between Pynson and Barclay provides insight into what may have been an ongoing collaboration between the printer and another monastic writer. While it is true that the English life of St Radegund is anonymous, it has long been ascribed to Henry Bradshaw, a Benedictine monk of St Werburge's, Chester.²¹ In Volume I of his 1785 edition of *Typographical Antiquities*, William Herbert wrote of the English life of St Radegund that:

Although the name of the author or translator of this book does not appear on the face of it, yet on comparing it with the life of St. Werburge, it may readily be perceived that both were penned by the same person, Henry Bradshaw, but hitherto omitted in every list of his works.²²

Herbert offered no basis for this claim, yet editors and antiquarian scholars have accepted his assertion for over two hundred years, despite it never having been validated by any concrete connection between the poet and the saint or any site related to her.²³ Recent computer-based multivariate analysis has demonstrated the validity of these hitherto unsupported claims and upholds the assertions of antiquarian scholars, showing a strong similarity in use of diction, alliteration, and rhyme scheme between the life of Radegund and Bradshaw's only known extant text, the life of St Werburge of Chester, patroness of Bradshaw's community.²⁴ Thus, it seems that we can finally attribute the work to Bradshaw with some confidence. Since Pynson also published Bradshaw's life of Werburge, his printing of the life of Radegund in addition might well represent part of an ongoing professional investment in the writings of another monastic

²⁰ In fact, Carlson cites an episode that highlights the potential conflicts of interest to which a commercial printer was vulnerable. Pynson published Barclay's verse translation of *Ship of Fools* in direct competition with de Worde, who published a prose translation just six months earlier, under the patronage of Margaret Beaufort; 'Alexander Barclay and Richard Pynson', pp. 294–96.

²¹ See à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, II, 9–10; Stephen and Lee, eds, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, II, 1083; Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford*, I (1959) 244; and Greatrex, 'Bradshaw, Henry (c. 1500–33)'.

²² Herbert, *Typographical Antiquities*, p. 294.

²³ The following authors and editors support Herbert's opinion: *Typographical Antiquities*, ed. by Dibdin; Bradshaw and Hawkins, *The Holy Lyfe and History of Saynt Werburge*, p. xvii; Bradshaw, *The Life of Saint Werburge of Chester*, ed. by Horstmann, pp. vii–viii.

²⁴ Carlson, 'Exploring the Authorship of the Life of St Radegund', pp. 47–76.

author, especially Bradshaw's female hagiographies. Such an investment finds precedent in Pynson's extensive and well-documented work with Barclay.

In the case of Pynson's work with Bradshaw, the chronology of Pynson's publications complicates our ability to determine whether Pynson and Bradshaw had as close a relationship as that shared by Pynson and Barclay. Although the Radegund life is one of Pynson's undated works,²⁵ the colophon of the earliest edition states, 'Thus endeth the lyfe of saynt Radegunde Imprinted by Rycharde Pynson printer to the kynges noble grace *Cum priuilegio a rege indulto*', which provides a terminus post quem of 1506, when Pynson was appointed as Printer to the King; a terminus ante quem can be deduced from the *Short Title Catalogue*'s dating of the work as late as c. 1525.²⁶ The poem itself must have been written by 1513, the year Bradshaw died. The 'Balade to the auctour' at the end of the life of St Werburge states that it was completed in the year of Bradshaw's death and was his final work; thus it is probable that the much shorter life of St Radegund was written earlier. Though this chronological evidence leaves unclear whether Pynson collaborated with Bradshaw in the publication of the life of Radegund, or whether he published the work after Bradshaw's death, it is certainly clear that Pynson worked more than once with Bradshaw's writings, and may well have worked with Bradshaw (who was his contemporary) in person.

Margaret Beaufort and Pynson's Publication of Devotional Texts

That Bradshaw would write an English life of St Werburge, a native saint and patroness of his Benedictine community, is not surprising, and illustrates the traditional manner of producing a vernacular devotional text for a specific religious community or individual.²⁷ There is no such obvious connection between Bradshaw and St Radegund. And yet, in the same way that multivariate analysis reveals linguistic evidence that could only be assumed before, a close examination of Bradshaw's patronage relationships — in particular, his relationship with Margaret Beaufort, and its possible intersections with his relationship to Pynson — reveals a variety of plausible connections between the English monastic poet and this foreign saint that may have prompted Bradshaw to write such a work, and Pynson to print it.

²⁵ *Hand-Lists*, ed. by Duff, Plomer, and Proctor, p. 15.

²⁶ *A Short Title Catalogue of Books*, ed. by Pollard and Redgrave, p. 158 [hereafter STC]. The STC does not, however, provide any specific evidence for this date.

²⁷ Johnston, 'Study', p. 161.

Although she had no direct connection to Bradshaw's Benedictine community at Chester, Radegund *was* the patroness of a community of Benedictine women at Cambridge, a community that was dissolved in 1496 by Bishop John Alcock of Ely and converted into Jesus College, which it remains to this day. Most scholars who consider the question agree that the life of Radegund should somehow be associated with the founding of Jesus College, as it seems unlikely that the composition of the only English version of the life should have no connection to the disbanding of the oldest English monastic foundation to bear the saint's name and its replacement by the college that named Radegund as one its patron saints.²⁸ The speculative chronology suggested above is significant in that it places the life's composition within a decade of this major event concerning the Cambridge priory, and it is plausible, if not provable, that Bradshaw could have written the life in the role of Benedictine apologist on the occasion of a sister community's dissolution.

Given that it is undated, it is possible that Pynson published the life of Radegund during Bradshaw's lifetime, as part of a professional collaboration between printer and monastic author that also produced the life of Werburge. Yet if Bradshaw wrote the Radegund life in the wake of the Cambridge priory's suppression, but Pynson did not print it until more than a decade after the poet's death (and up to thirty years after the dissolution itself, as suggested by the STC's dating of the printed edition), it seems probable that its publication was influenced by other factors and relationships in Pynson's professional life, and was not necessarily directly tied to Bradshaw or the circumstances of the Cambridge community of St Radegund's.

The most likely of these connections is Pynson's relationship with Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, whose translations are the subject of Morley's essay below. Although Wynkyn de Worde could be considered Lady Margaret's preferred printer given the amount of work he produced for her, the King's mother maintained a working relationship with Pynson, providing an opportunity for healthy competition between the two rivals.²⁹ In particular, she seems to have favoured Pynson for printing works that she herself had translated. In 1504, Pynson published an edition of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* that had been translated from French to English by Beaufort and her collaborator, William Atkinson. In 1506 Pynson printed Beaufort's translation from the French of the *Mirror of Gold for the Sinful Soul*, discussed in Morley's essay.

²⁸ Neville, 'Richard Pynson, King's Printer', p. 144; *The Lyfe of Saynt Radegunde*, ed. by Brittain, p. ix; Johnston, 'Study', pp. 161–62.

²⁹ Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 185–86.

Margaret Beaufort was a valuable asset to Pynson, in that printers profited financially from having vernacular works by well-known figures on their lists.³⁰ Pynson likely derived an even more significant advantage from his collaboration with Beaufort; as her working relationship with Pynson predated his appointment as Printer to the King, and as she exerted considerable influence during her son's reign, it is probable that she was, at least in part, instrumental in his 1506 appointment.³¹

Though there is no explicit connection between Pynson's work with Beaufort and his printing of the life of Radegund, we do have several possible points of historical connection between them, as well as a shared interest in the same contemporary themes. As noted above, scholars have speculated that the life of Radegund should be associated with the 1496 conversion of St Radegund's into Jesus College, and Beaufort's involvement with this event is very well documented.³² Beaufort was closely associated with Henry VII in the foundation of Jesus College; she is named as '*carissimae matris nostrae Margaretae*' in the original royal licenses of 1496,³³ and she visited the college with her son, the king, in September 1498.³⁴ In addition to her involvement with its founding, Beaufort continued to be connected to Jesus College in other ways. In 1498/99 she paid for a scribe for Chubbes, the college's first master, and in 1503, she paid £26 for new college buildings.³⁵ Margaret Beaufort also had a literary collaboration with one of the original fellows of the college, the same William Atkinson with whom she translated Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*. Finally, Beaufort's stepson, James Stanley, was elevated to the see of Ely in 1506, a position he held until his death in 1515. He seems to have used his position to perpetuate the interests of the college, issuing the earliest surviving statutes for the college and appropriating the rectory of Great Shelford to Jesus College for the establishment of a grammar school.³⁶

³⁰ Boffey, 'Women Authors', p. 173.

³¹ Neville, 'Richard Pynson, King's Printer', p. 34; Gris , 'Syon Abbey in Late Medieval England', p. 37.

³² Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 202–31 and Underwood, 'The Lady Margaret and her Cambridge Connections', pp. 67–81.

³³ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv (1823), p. 218.

³⁴ Underwood, 'The Lady Margaret and Her Cambridge Connections', p. 68.

³⁵ Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 213; and Underwood, 'The Lady Margaret and her Cambridge Connections', p. 68.

³⁶ Underwood, 'Politics and Piety', p. 10. See also Morley's discussion of Beaufort's political activities in her essay in this volume.

This final point raises the possibility of a significant additional connection between Beaufort and the life of Radegund. In October 1485, shortly after his victory at Bosworth Field, Henry VII named his stepfather, Thomas Lord Stanley, the first earl of Derby, a title that came with substantial estates in northwest England, confiscated from Richard III's sympathizers.³⁷ As a result, the Stanleys became the largest landowners in Cheshire and Lancashire, a position that included the stewardship of St Werburge's, Chester, where Bradshaw was a monk.³⁸ Lord Stanley and Margaret Beaufort were therefore Bradshaw's patrons. Beaufort travelled extensively with her husband throughout the North, including Chester, and was generous to local religious foundations.³⁹ Thus it is a tantalizing possibility that Beaufort herself was the connection between the former Benedictine community of St Radegund's, the monastic poet, and the printer. It is conceivable that Bradshaw wrote the life of Radegund with Beaufort in mind as a sort of inheritor of a tradition of female piety represented by Radegund and the Cambridge nunnery that possessed her name, and that Beaufort in turn introduced him to Pynson who printed it at her request. Such a scenario might even explain the possible gap in time between the disbanding of the community and the printing of the text.

Even if the life of St Radegund came to Pynson through other means, Pynson may well have been influenced by the similarities between the saint's life and Beaufort's life in choosing to print the text. Just as Radegund is a hagiographic model of a devout noblewoman who pursues a religious life both during her marriage and after she is released from it, Margaret Beaufort may be considered an historical example of the same. She was declared *femme sole* in a 1485 act of parliament and took a vow of chastity in 1499.⁴⁰ While she never formally entered a religious community, her devotional practice and her generosity to religious foundations were well known. The similarity of her life to hagiographic models was not overlooked by her contemporaries or by modern scholars. In his *Mornyng Remembraunce* sermon, Beaufort's confessor Bishop John Fisher 'celebrated her as a religious and social exemplar, both the society of her household and the pattern of her own piety corresponding with his vision of an ideal discipline'.⁴¹ Much more recently C. Annette Gris  has similarly observed, 'as mother of the king, a powerful landowner, and a celibate

³⁷ Coward, *The Stanleys*, pp. 12–13.

³⁸ Coward, *The Stanleys*, pp. 96, 122.

³⁹ Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 146–54.

⁴⁰ Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 98–99.

⁴¹ Underwood, 'Politics and Piety', p. 52.

vowess, Beaufort achieved an autonomy that provoked comparisons, then and now, to Anglo-Saxon queens.⁴² Rebecca Krug has suggested that Beaufort may have commissioned the English translation of the French romance *Blanchardyn and Eglantine* from Caxton, at least in part, because she ‘could find herself [...] in the words of the page’ and ‘it represented an idealized version of her experience of the world.’⁴³ Morley’s essay on Lady Margaret Beaufort’s translations also supports the argument that the king’s mother could act as a powerful role model for female piety. We might imagine Beaufort’s interest in the life of Radegund stemming from a similar impulse (or Pynson’s interest in Radegund coming from his observation of Beaufort’s work with Caxton). At the very least, Beaufort and Radegund are both examples of late medieval laywomen’s devotional practice, from the historical and literary spheres, respectively.

Pynson, Richard Fox, and Royal Brides

The interconnectedness of Pynson’s official position as Printer to the King and his collaborative relationships does not end with his work with Margaret Beaufort but continues in his work with other male religious writers and their female patrons and audiences. His role in defining this relatively new position and exploiting the potential of nearly-as-new technology brought Pynson into professional contact with some of the most prominent advisors to the crown and he was able to combine his penchant for collaborative work and his service of promoting the interests of his royal patron. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Pynson’s relationship with Bishop Richard Fox (d. 1528) who, with the possible exception of Margaret Beaufort, was the most powerful and influential of Pynson’s collaborators, and who brought the printer’s work into a more public and political context than did even the king’s mother.⁴⁴ Fox, who held the bishoprics of Exeter, Bath and Wells, Durham, and Winchester, was a trusted royal advisor from the earliest years of the Tudor dynasty who had been with Henry VII since his accession to the throne.⁴⁵ He was first appointed as the King’s secretary and then, in 1487, he was named Keeper of the Privy Seal, a position he held until 1514, well into the reign of Henry VIII. Fox remained a trusted counsellor even after he resigned that position.

⁴² Gris , ‘Syon Abbey’, p. 195.

⁴³ Krug, *Reading Families*, p. 89.

⁴⁴ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, p. 353.

⁴⁵ Lander, *Government and Community England*, p. 126.

Fox had a long-standing relationship with Pynson; their professional relationship spanned two decades and the reigns of the first two Tudor monarchs. As early as 1501, Pynson printed a *Sarum processionale* edited by Fox; sixteen years later, he used the same woodcut of Fox's emblem, the pelican, in printing Fox's English translation of the *Rule of Saynt Benet*.⁴⁶ With its emphasis on applying the Benedictine Rule to a community of women, Fox's translation recalls themes also raised in the life of Radegund. For example, at the end of Bradshaw's poem, Radegund makes a deathbed exhortation to her nuns:

Dayly to obserue the essentials thre
Of saynt Benettes rule / your holy religion
Parfyt obedience / and wylfull pouerte
With the floure of clenness and pure chastite.
(*The Lyfe of Saynt Radegunde*, xx, 8)⁴⁷

In this respect, the life of Radegund offers a hagiographic counterpoint to Fox's apparent interest in instructing religious, and in particular Benedictine women, as reflected in his translation of St Benedict's Rule. Cleanness and chastity were key virtues for female religious and in addition were relevant topics of discussion not only for queens (such as Radegund and Beaufort) but also for devotional lay audiences, given the high value placed on moderation in behaviour in spiritual writings. These examples of feminine purity — both monastic and secular — would therefore have resonated with the early print audience and would be particularly important for queens. Given this work with Fox, as well as his collaborations with Barclay and Bradshaw, Pynson may have had his own interest in making works of spiritual instruction accessible in the vernacular; his publication of the life of Radegund would certainly be consistent with this professional priority.

In addition to working with Pynson for his personal projects, Fox also used the printer's services for more official business. As royal advisor, Fox employed the London presses, especially Pynson's, to create an extravagant propaganda campaign around the weddings and betrothals of Henry's children as a means to advance the king's reputation among Englishmen and foreigners alike.⁴⁸ For example, one of the earliest uses of the printing press in England as an instru-

⁴⁶ Neville, 'Richard Pynson', p. 26.

⁴⁷ Because Brittain's edition of the life of Radegund does not provide line numbers, all references to the text will be given by chapter and stanza number (e.g. 'xx, 8' designates Chapter xx, stanza 8).

⁴⁸ Neville, 'Richard Pynson, King's Printer', p. 38.

ment for the dissemination of information was the English translation of the letter granting papal dispensation for the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, a union which brought together England's warring royal houses.⁴⁹ As Morley suggests, Lady Margaret Beaufort was also instrumental in organizing this marriage. The early Tudors were acutely aware of the symbolic value of a wedding for enhancing their authority. The fullest realization of this was the elaborate and highly symbolic procession of Katherine of Aragon through the streets of London and her marriage to Prince Arthur.⁵⁰ The marriages of Henry VII's children, and the pageantry associated with them, offered a means to legitimize his kingship.⁵¹ As Sydney Anglo has noted, the pomp and circumstance surrounding early Tudor wedding ceremonies were not simply embellishments of political realities but were, in fact, 'the instruments employed to erect the entire Tudor dynasty upon a sure foundation'.⁵² The advertisement of such events, with their political significance and symbolic power, was essential for Henry VII, who was essentially a usurper with only a tenuous hold on power, and who exploited the new medium of print to record and disseminate descriptions of such magnificence.⁵³

Just as Bishop Fox participated in the marriage negotiations of the king's children and was instrumental in supervising arrangements for the marriages, he was also involved in the promotion of these events. Pynson printed two texts related to these arrangements that were commissioned, and likely written, by Fox.⁵⁴ The first, entitled *Traduction & marriage of the princesse* (STC 4814), is an abridged version of a manuscript text known as *The Receyt of the Ladie Kateryne*, which marked the occasion of the 1501 London nuptials of Prince

⁴⁹ Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, p. 19.

⁵⁰ For a detailed description of Katherine's procession through London and its symbolic significance, see Kipling's introduction in *The Receyt of the Ladie Kateryne*, ed. by Kipling, pp. xiii–xxix.

⁵¹ Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, pp. 8–10.

⁵² Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* p. 11.

⁵³ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, p. 354.

⁵⁴ Although Anglo argues that the attribution of the *Traduction* to Fox is an error (*Spectacle*, p. 58), Neville cites a manuscript draft of the princess's route through London that is annotated in Fox's hand as well as a contemporary account by Francis Bacon: "the chief man that took care was Bishop Foxe" ('Pynson, the King's Printer', pp. 23–24). Kipling argues that the author 'was university educated, a bishop, an envoy upon occasion to the court of Burgundy, a man of literary leanings, a Tudor apologist, and a writer of competent, if undistinguished English' (*The Receyt of the Ladie Kateryne*, ed. by Kipling, p. xix). This certainly describes Fox, and his involvement in the planning and preparation of the events make him a logical candidate.

Arthur and Katherine of Aragon. It describes all of the ceremonial aspects of the wedding, but with a practical focus; written in the future tense, it was probably intended as a program of events for the various officials involved. In a similar vein, Fox was also involved in Pynson's 1508 printing of *Pro sponsalibus et matrimonio inter principem Karolem & dominam Mariam*, intended to mark the marriage of Henry's daughter to Charles, grandson of both King Ferdinand of Spain and the Emperor Maximilian. In the following year, Pynson printed an English version of this text, entitled *The solempnities & triumphes doon at the spousells and marriage of the Kings doughter* (STC 17558); it is one of the first works to identify Pynson as 'prynter unto the kynges noble grace'.⁵⁵ In contrast to the *Traduction, Solempnities & triumphes* is written in the past tense and intended as a meditation on the magnificence of the Princess Mary's wedding. One thing that both English texts have in common, however, is an implicit suggestion that these weddings, as both political alliances and symbolic gestures, legitimize Henry VII's royal authority. It is the princess brides who are ostensibly celebrated in these texts, although the royal parents and various dignitaries take centre stage in the ceremonies through which England's place is bolstered on the European political stage.

Radegund's position as a princess and queen is similar to that of Katherine and Mary in these early Tudor printed accounts; more specifically, they share an aesthetic of spectacle that offers us a context for reading the account of saintly marriage in Pynson's printed saint's life. This is significant in that the long descriptive passages dedicated to the saint's wedding and the ensuing festivities are unique to the English version of the life, and in fact represent a break from the Latin sources, which deliberately downplay her marriage.⁵⁶ Generally speaking, the addition of these passages is consistent with the late medieval trend of writing vernacular hagiography that reflects the experience of lay audiences. Although Radegund's husband Lothary is depicted as villainous in the Latin sources, Bradshaw takes great pains to represent him as a suitable match for the saint, focusing on his lineage and military success rather than his pagan barbarity.⁵⁷ Thus, not only does the description of the wedding festivities have no precedent in earlier versions of the life of Radegund, but also its strong emphasis on the social correctness of Radegund's marriage is actually

⁵⁵ Neville, 'Richard Pynson', p. 30.

⁵⁶ *The Lyfe of Saynt Radegunde*, ed. by Brittain, ii, 9–16.

⁵⁷ Lothary, known as Clothar in the Latin texts, is vilified in the sixth-century account by Fortunatus, from which Antoninus's fifteenth-century text derives. See Fortunatus, 'The Life of Holy Radegund', and Antoninus of Florence, 'III. De Sancta Radegunde'.

at odds with the older Latin tradition, in which the saint is virtually abducted and coerced into marriage. In the late medieval English account, Radegund's sanctity is not solely based on ascetic behaviour and a rejection of marriage but on her good governance, which she exhibits within marriage as well as the religious life. In this way she reflects a contemporary interest in lay devotion as well as an interest in the positive representation of monastic self-governance, similar to what we find in Fox's translation of the *Rule*.

This representation of marriage is also consistent with the interests of Pynson's royal patrons, as well as with the works Fox wrote and Pynson printed in support of those patrons. In keeping with Radegund's status as daughter of a king, the passages added to the vernacular life also participate in a glorification of political marriage with all its attendant splendour in a similar way to the works of nuptial propaganda that Pynson produced for Fox. For example, lavish expenditure in service to others was, in its own right, an important element in the construction of identity and authority in the early Tudor period. The description of the preparations made for Henry VII's daughter Mary in *Solempnities & triumphes* emphasizes both the king's wealth, as represented by the gold and silver plate, and his generous hospitality, as represented by the food and wine contained therein: 'I shall not reherse what solempnitie and ordre in seruyce / what delicate and sumptuous metes / what dyuersytie of pleasaunt wyne / what plate of gold and siluer gilted / the kyngs grace had and was serued with that daye'.⁵⁸

Similarly, the wedding scene in the life of Radegund establishes material grounds for the saint's authority in its attention to the lavish details of the feasts:

All thinges well ordered (as afore sayd was)
To attende in the hall marshalles were redy
Of metes and drinkes / theyr was great plenty
Veneson wildfoule mycle aboundaunce
The condites of wyne ranne with great pleasaunce.

(*The Lyfe of Saynt Radegunde*, ii, 15)

The wedding scenes in the life of Radegund are designed to convey the saint's wealth and authority but they are also concerned with the potential of marriage to confirm social order, a theme that certainly would have resonated with Pynson's Tudor patrons. For example, the description of the wedding feast anticipates the ways in which the saint's marriage takes place within a highly struc-

⁵⁸ *Solempnities and triumphes doone and made at the spousells and mariage of the kyngs daughter the Ladye Marye to the Prynce of Castile Archeduke of Austrige*, STC 17558, para. 28.

tured and fully populated court context. In fact, the entire description is fundamentally based on social order and correctness, and the poet seems to delight in describing idealized hierarchies, which bear witness to and support the union:

Lordes of the lande were redy present
 Dukes / erles / barons / and knyghtes doughty
 The commons assembled euer delygent
 To gyue attendaunce as was theyr duety
 * * * * *
 The byssshop was redy / with his ministers all
 To execute his office of the said matrimony
 The obseruauntes was done with honour ryall
 The masse was songe / with mycle melody
 With belles / and orgons / and solempne minstrelsy
 The sacrament of spousage / was celebrat that day
 With reuerence and worship / in theyr best aray.

(*The Lyfe of Saynt Radegunde*, ii, 12–14)

The hierarchical organization of secular guests on the one hand and clerical participants on the other, and the proper fulfilment of their respective functions, suggest an idealized social order that finds its analogues in the detailed lists of dignitaries and their functions laid out in the marriage accounts of Henry Tudor's children.

There is no evidence to suggest that Bishop Fox had any direct involvement in Pynson's printing of the life of Radegund. Rather, the work reflects the interests and concerns of one of Pynson's most significant collaborators, as well as those of the Tudor monarchs to whom they were both ultimately accountable. It is a text of which Fox would likely have approved, both for its religious instructional value as well as for its espousal of the early Tudors' attitudes towards marriage.

Printing for Profit: Pynson and his Audience

To this point, we have considered the ways in which the life of Radegund, a foreign saint with no major English devotion, nevertheless reflects the professional priorities of the Printer to the King: his interest in collaboration with monastic authors, his patronage relationship with Margaret Beaufort, and his endorsement of the legitimacy of the early Tudor monarchs. However, it is important to remember that, in addition to the personal and political relationships described above, Pynson's career was also shaped by the market forces at work in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries — he was above all a

businessman, and remained so throughout his tenure as Printer to the King. But even here, we see how Pynson's publishing the life of Radegund would also have served his interest in maintaining his share in the market for books of devotion and meditation that mirrored the life experiences of their audiences and thus became increasingly common products of the presses.

Although Pynson's position as the king's printer was a career-defining one, and the interests of his royal patrons influenced what he did and did not print, he must also be included among that first generation of English printers who were, first and foremost, influenced by commercial considerations.⁵⁹ While Continental printers were primarily concerned with producing Latin texts for the university markets in England, English printers set out to fill a gap by supplying books in English to those who needed them, not for professional purposes but to maintain a certain lifestyle or level of status.⁶⁰ Interest in private devotional reading in the vernacular predates the advent of printing in England, but printers were ready and willing to exploit this interest for their own profit. In producing so many English devotional books, the early printers were accurately reflecting private reading's overwhelming spiritual emphasis.⁶¹

The value of Beaufort's support of Pynson can be seen in this context as well, as she provided a third significant benefit to him beyond that of author and patron: along with other royal ladies and their households, she also represented an influential segment of the market for spiritual books printed for a lay audience.⁶² Beaufort's coterie of pious noblewomen actively supported the printing of vernacular works of devotion,⁶³ and as an act of charity she made vernacular devotional works available to readers who did not understand Latin.⁶⁴ Examples of Beaufort's patronage include her involvement in the exchange at court of such popular early printed works as the Sarum primer, Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, Love's *Mirror*, and the *Vitas Patrum*.⁶⁵ While the life of Radegund is not on that list, it certainly could have been; with its model of the devotional life of a married queen, it would have perfectly reflected her tastes and experiences.

While Beaufort may represent, as both author and audience, the most socioeconomically privileged example of women's interest and involvement in

⁵⁹ Carlson, 'Alexander Barclay and Richard Pynson', p. 283.

⁶⁰ Ford, 'Private Ownership of Printed Books', p. 227.

⁶¹ Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p. 117.

⁶² Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 181. See also Morley's essay in this volume.

⁶³ Summit, *Lost Property*, p. 113.

⁶⁴ Krug, *Reading Families*, p. 102, and see Morley's essay following.

⁶⁵ Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, pp. 118–26.

the print trade, certainly there were many lower-profile women who, through their own interest in reading and sharing vernacular devotional materials, also contributed to the commercial viability of printing as consumers. Carol Meale and Julia Boffey recognize this overlap of audiences, indicating that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, 'a special category of "books for gentlewomen", clearly distinguishable from the reading matter of aristocratic women [...] is hard to isolate'.⁶⁶ Barry Collett has observed that Pynson was at the forefront in responding to this market for 'devotional publications directed towards informing early modern lay Englishwomen how to live a pious life in a domestic setting'.⁶⁷ We have already noted that Pynson's location in London was such that it catered to the city's lay professional population, and that he had something of a monopoly on law books. But we might also judge from some of his other works, such as the *Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande*, the life of St Brigit of Sweden, Walter Hilton's treatise on the Mixed Life, and the life of St Werburge, that Pynson was also interested in producing lay devotional materials which represented a shrewd and profitable business venture: Radegund's actions and instructions throughout the text provide an example of feminine devotional practice appropriate to the aristocratic and gentry, lay, and religious readers who would have constituted the work's audience. Pynson, gauging an expanding interest in works that had both devotional and instructional appeal, may ultimately have decided to print this work because it would have suited the literary tastes of a wide cross-section of his readers, and thus would likely have proved a profitable business venture for him.

Conclusion

Although we may never know with complete certainty exactly when or why the life of Radegund was written, the suggestion that its composition was connected to the dissolution of St Radegund's Priory is compelling. However, that event does not adequately account for the work's coming into print, especially given the chronological considerations that make such an explanation seem unlikely. While they may have worked together in some capacity, it is likely that poet and printer had different agendas in the production of the life, although the professional networks in which they operated probably influenced both men. For Richard Pynson, this was not a monastic context but one made up

⁶⁶ Meale and Boffey, 'Gentlewoman's Reading', p. 527.

⁶⁷ Collett, *Female Monastic Life*, p. 20.

of his connections to the crown, to powerful Tudor patrons and collaborators, and to a growing affluent lay market for his works. The previous discussion suggests that Pynson printed the life of Radegund as a response to a confluence of personal, cultural, and economic forces at work during his career. The life of this sixth-century Frankish saint functioned in the early sixteenth century in England in a variety of ways: from serving as a means of constructing nuptial and royal authority, to strengthening patronage ties, to representing a literary investment for the audiences who were purchasing vernacular works in print. Pynson's decision to print it shines some light on the professional priorities of a printer at the forefront of establishing a new technology as well as the collaborative relationships that helped to define his career.

This discussion highlights the collaborative relationships among those who produced vernacular devotional texts — the poets and the printers, in this example; the translators, writers, and scribes in Morley's and Innes-Parker's essays — and those who patronized and read these texts, such as the royal Tudor women, nuns, and wider audiences. The choice to print the life of Radegund seems to have been made with all these audiences in mind, and its appealing representation of feminine nobility and piety seems to speak to its patrons and also to satisfy the interest of the growing print market in such models. Exemplifying royal women in the life of Radegund (and the other texts associated with Lady Margaret Beaufort and her granddaughters printed in this period) certainly celebrated the Tudor monarchy but it also provided models of female piety for the lay audience. The feminine models offered in the texts studied in this essay reveal the complexities of negotiating among the secular and spiritual demands made on these women. In the essay that follows this one, Stephanie Morley marks similar concerns in *The Mirrour of Golde to the Synfull Soule*, translated by Lady Margaret Beaufort. Beaufort uses representations of female experience in this text to make connections with her readers, demonstrating the collaborative processes of textual production and reception and illustrating the ways in which women can use books — reading, translating, sharing, and patronizing them — for spiritual benefit.

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‘FOR THE PROUFFYTE OF OTHER’:
LADY MARGARET BEAUFORT AND THE
FEMALE READER AS TRANSLATOR IN
*THE MIRROR OF GOLDE TO THE
SYNFULL SOULE*

Stephanie Morley

Christina Carlson’s preceding essay examined the collaborative efforts of printers, authors, and patrons in presenting vernacular works of spiritual instruction at the end of the Middle Ages. Following her work in the present volume, this essay continues to examine the roles and representations of women readers, patrons, and writers in order to acknowledge and demonstrate the myriad and varied ways in which women were active participants in medieval devotional culture — these themes will also be taken up by Catherine Innes-Parker in her subsequent essay. Academic studies of the reading habits of medieval women are doing much to uncover the far-reaching networks of female textual communities that flourished during the late Middle Ages in England, while at the same time they are recovering histories of medieval women’s book ownership, library building, and patronage activities that are the necessary complement of their reading habits.¹ These studies show that the lion’s

¹ Among the many studies of medieval women’s reading habits and book ownership see particularly Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*; Bell, ‘Medieval Women Book Owners’; Hanna, ‘Some Norfolk Women and Their Books’; Hutchison, ‘Devotional Reading in the Monastery’;

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share of texts with which medieval women were most closely associated belong to the category of devotional literature, demonstrating that women were intimately connected with the practice of reading with a spiritual intention in late medieval England. Typically, the figure of the medieval woman reader provides bibliographic and testamentary evidence with which to measure the social and intellectual history of women in that period and, just as importantly, provides a psychological perspective to the experience of reading. Indeed, the psychology of the medieval woman reader has been of particular interest, especially regarding her complicity in or resistance to textual constructions of gender identity.² Foundational studies in the late twentieth century of medieval women's reading and female readers established a useful framework in which the aggressive male author required the passive female reader to submit to dominant constructions of gender, or oppose them.³ More recent studies move beyond this binary model to examine the nuances of gendered reading positions and the possibilities offered for collaboration between those involved in the production and reception of medieval texts. Medieval religious writings offer a rich opportunity to explore the ways in which contemporary female readers approached a text. Catherine Innes-Parker's and Christina Carlson's articles in the present volume demonstrate ways in which devotional texts focus on reading as a practical way of helping readers to perfect a spiritual life; careful reading means, among other things, that the reader adopts and enacts models of behaviour that are based on perceptions of God's will. While this necessarily requires that a reader negotiate cultural discourses of gender (as well as additional, and not less important, perspectives such as social status), a major aim of devotional reading is spiritual formation, and late medieval religious texts such as those discussed by Innes-Parker seem interested in training readers to recognize didactic narratives that can be implemented into their daily lives.⁴ Carlson's preceding analysis of representations of married queenship illustrates that contemporary models of female

Meale, "... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englich, and frensch"; and Riddy, 'Women Talking about the Things of God'.

² Substantial discussions of the various reading strategies of medieval women include Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*; Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender*; Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience*; and Schibanoff, 'Taking the Gold out of Egypt'.

³ I am following here Judith Fetterley's observations regarding a feminist approach to reading, which have been influential on discussions of medieval women readers. See Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader*.

⁴ See Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, pp. 4, 23.

lay piety were influential in the production and reception of pre-Reformation printed devotional works. This essay will consider similar influences.

My aim here is to focus on an example of the woman translator as an active reader engaged in making meaning for herself as well as for the readers of her translation — an approach I share with Innes-Parker's consideration of the female author of the *Festis*. The following discussion explores *The Mirrour of Golde to the Synfull Soule*, a devotional manual with a unique translation history that offers a new perspective on women's devotional reading and enriches our understanding of reading as a worshipful practice. This text is explicitly linked to an influential female reader, Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, who translated the text into English from a French version of Jacobus de Gruytrode's *Speculum aureum animae peccatrix* and had it printed by Richard Pynson around 1506. It is a text that has been of interest to literary scholars primarily because it can claim a female translator in a period when there were scant few;⁵ its contemporary popularity is also attested by multiple printings: it was republished three years later (1509) in three printings after Lady Margaret died, and then three times more in the 1520s (twice in 1522, and once in 1526).⁶ *The Mirrour of Golde* comprises seven chapters that guide the 'sinfull soule' through a daily devotional reading schedule of the gathered teachings of biblical and patristic authors, advising readers to abjure worldly goods in favour of spiritual rewards and encouraging contemplation of physical death and a turn towards heavenly life. It is precisely the kind of text with which the medieval woman reader was most associated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and a typical example of what Mary C. Erler describes as a 'text of formation, with an emphasis on routine, seclusion, and self-abnegation',⁷ especially for lay readers. *The Mirrour of Golde* is generally dismissed as an unremarkable text representative of conservative religious attitudes, perhaps most effectively by Alexandra Barratt who calls it 'a tissue of commonplaces' by an 'unoriginal writer'.⁸ It is the second of two vernacular-to-vernacular translations undertaken by Lady Margaret; the first was a translation of Book IV of

⁵ For a detailed examination of Margaret Beaufort's translations, including a careful reading of Margaret's embellishments and augmentations to *The Mirrour of Golde*, see Hosington, 'Margaret Beaufort's Translations as Mirrors of Piety'.

⁶ The three extant copies produced for Lady Margaret are held in the Bodleian Library, the British Library, and the Cambridge University Library (STC 6894.5). These are deluxe copies printed on vellum with woodcuts at the start of each chapter and decorative borders on each page.

⁷ Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p. 137.

⁸ *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. by Barratt, p. 302.

the *Imitation of Christ* which Pynson printed in 1504 (with translations of the first three books by William Atkinson, as commissioned by Lady Margaret). *Imitatio Christi*, written in the 1420s by Thomas à Kempis, was a landmark text of the *Devotio Moderna* movement. Lady Margaret's involvement in the production of the first Middle English translation is an important event in bringing this continental movement to England; thus, scholars have tended to see her contribution to the *Imitation of Christ* as more ground-breaking than is her work on the theologically conservative *The Mirroure of Golde*.⁹

This essay will revisit *The Mirroure of Golde* as a tool to increase our understanding of medieval aristocratic women's reading, translating, and use of books, just as the *Festis*, discussed by Innes-Parker, does. Setting aside the traditional binary of submissive female reader and aggressive male author allows us to consider how one female reader influenced the pious print audience by providing edifying literature for their spiritual and intellectual growth. Scholars such as Mary Erler, Carol M. Meale, and Felicity Riddy have already demonstrated that the movement of books between women within families, and between religious and lay women reveals an overlap in the reading tastes of women within certain reading communities, while Karen K. Jambeck's study of the patronage networks of medieval noblewomen shows that women tended to support the production of texts — most often of a religious or devotional nature — that promoted ideals and values that were important to them.¹⁰ This essay builds on these important bibliographic studies by examining the relationship between translation and reading in Lady Margaret's text. Concentrating on the rhetorical methods that force the reader to remember and to internalize the lessons of *The Mirroure of Golde*, I explore how the text's didacticism manifests itself on the level of the translator as producer and reader. A public figure as well known for her political acumen as for her literary influence, Lady Margaret was also notable for patronage activities that emphasized learning: she patronized writers, printers, and clergy; established lectureships in Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge; and she was in contact with the Carthusian and Bridgettine orders in England — houses that have come to be associated with the production of religious works in English. Given Lady Margaret's commitment to education, I argue that her choice to translate and disseminate a text that asks its readers to scrutinize their reading habits fits into her wider program of pious public

⁹ See Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 184–85.

¹⁰ See Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*; Meale, "... alle the bokes that I haue"; Riddy, 'Women Talking about the Things of God'. For a discussion of matrilineal patronage activities see Jambeck, 'Patterns of Women's Literary Patronage'.

service, which in this instance provides devotional texts to a broader public and offers instruction on devotional reading within the texts themselves — moving the kind of religious instruction we will find in Innes-Parker's manuscript from the cell to the manor house, and beyond. In this way Lady Margaret Beaufort and her text illustrate the collaborative processes of textual production and reception and also demonstrate that women readers could inhabit varied and more active reading positions while still supporting the institutional structures in which they were embedded.

* * *

Lady Margaret's reputation as a savvy player in the game of Tudor politics — especially as an assiduous manoeuvrer who placed her son, Henry VII, on the English throne — has been the subject of numerous biographies,¹¹ and her 'ruthless practice of realpolitik' is of interest to many scholars.¹² It is widely accepted that she was instrumental in the overthrow of Richard III and that it was she who negotiated the marriage between Elizabeth of York and her son to unite the houses of York and Lancaster under newly minted Tudor rule. Indeed, Henry's claim to the throne is based on his mother's Lancastrian heritage.¹³ Lady Margaret also applied her political prowess (considered uncommon if not anomalous in a woman by her near-contemporary biographers), to her own affairs so successfully that she was able to negotiate for herself an autonomy over her finances and estates that was unprecedented for a woman, this occurring just before the period of her most active literary production.¹⁴ In his first parliament in 1485, Henry granted his mother the status of *femme sole* which meant that, despite being married to Thomas Stanley, Margaret was

¹¹ See Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother* for the most recent biography. See also Cooper, *The Lady Margaret*; Routh, *A Memoir of Lady Margaret Beaufort*; Underwood, 'Politics and Piety'; Jones and Underwood, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort'; Warnicke, 'The Lady Margaret Beaufort'; and Warnicke, 'The Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond'.

¹² Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 65.

¹³ As a descendant and heiress of John of Gaunt and the great-great-granddaughter of Edward III, Lady Margaret was arguably the clearest heir to the throne after Richard III's death. This is complicated, however, by the fact that her great-grandfather, John Beaufort, was John of Gaunt's illegitimate heir, born of his affair with Kathryn Swynford; the family's legitimacy was established retroactively by a papal bull and an act of Parliament. See also Carlson's essay on the role of Richard Pynson in the propaganda for the Tudor weddings.

¹⁴ For a useful summary of the earlier biographies that focus on her political machinations, see Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 1–16.

legally considered a 'woman alone' and was granted independent control of her substantial monies and properties. This was the first time such a status was granted to a woman of the aristocracy, though it had previously been used by married women of the merchant class who wanted to run a business (usually their husband's).¹⁵ In 1499 Lady Margaret took a vow of chastity — often taken by widows but rarely by women still married — which removed her further from her husband's authority. In her study of the practice, Erler notes that both pious and economic motives informed the decision to take a chastity vow, as it granted women control over their own resources 'safeguarded from male intrusion in the form of pressure to remarry'.¹⁶ With these legalities in place, Lady Margaret was able to maintain her own estate at Collyweston independently from Stanley, and she managed it efficiently if sometimes ruthlessly.¹⁷ Seemingly unwilling to let traditional structures of power prevent her from political or personal control, Lady Margaret worked to fashion a public identity that became increasingly associated with piety, devotional reading, and book ownership.

Until recently Lady Margaret's reputation as a political tour-de-force has eclipsed her remarkable reputation as a producer — in her capacities as patron, translator, and reader — of devotional literature.¹⁸ Her literary activities are coloured by her cultivation of an austere orthodox piety, publicly managed, that manifested itself through such practices as performance of devotional rituals in personal chapels, ownership of devotional books in English and French, and donation of pious books.¹⁹ Much of what is known of Lady Margaret's reading habits comes from her confessor, John Fisher, whose post-mortem eulogy

¹⁵ Jones and Underwood note that 'for a married aristocratic woman to declare herself *femme sole* was quite unprecedented', and suggest that this was a pragmatic move to keep crown lands away from the Stanley family. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 99. On the law of *femme sole*, see Barron, 'The "Golden Age" of Women in Medieval London', pp. 39–40.

¹⁶ Erler, 'English Vowed Women', p. 157.

¹⁷ See Jones, 'Collyweston'.

¹⁸ For Lady Margaret's literary activities see especially Edwards and Meale, 'The Marketing of Printed Books'; Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Books'; and Krug, *Reading Families*.

¹⁹ Powell notes that scholarly interest in the piety of medieval women reveals that these and other outward manifestations of piety are common among women of Lady Margaret's class; articles on Margaret Holland (Lady Margaret's grandmother), Margaret, Lady Hungerford, and Cecily Neville, Duchess of York demonstrate that these women exhibit similar pious practices ('Lady Margaret Beaufort and Her Books', pp. 198–99). For a compelling essay that examines these reported shows of piety alongside other (less lofty) aspects of medieval women's lives, see Archer, 'Piety in Question'.

recalls the 'orderynge of her soule to god', describing a rigorous series of meditations and prayers centred around private and communal reading:

Fryst in prayer every daye at her uprissyng whiche comynly was not longe after v of the klok she began certayne devocyons, & so after theym with one of her gentyl-women the matynes of our lady, whiche kepte her to then she came in to her closet, where then with her chapeleyne she sayd also matyns of the daye. And after that dayly herde iij or v masses upon her knees, soo contynuyng in her prayers & devocations unto the hour of dyner. [...] After dyner ful truely she wolde go her stacyons to thre altuers dayly. Dayly her dyryges & commendacyons she wolde saye. and her evensonges before souper bothe of the daye & of our lady, besyde many other prayers & psalters of Davyd thugh out the yere. And at nyght before she wente to bedde she faylled not to resorte unto her chapell, & there a large quarter of an hour to occupye her in devocyons.²⁰

This description notes her extensive devotional activities — Lady Margaret reserved many hours of her presumably already busy days for her worship schedule, modelled on the monastic office and including numerous reading and recitations. The variety and quantity of activities are impressive and would have required the resources of a king's mother to support them. This devotional activity was usually performed in personal rooms or worship spaces housed within the larger household and in the company of several attendants or clerics. Andrew Taylor has noted that such accounts of the lives of pious women show a 'cultural practice of bookishness, privacy, and piety [that] were intimately connected', though alongside Lady Margaret's private practice described here we must also see the very public nature of her 'bookishness' expressed through her patronage of the early printers, as Carlson's essay (above) examines in her discussion of Pynson and *The Life of St Radegund*.²¹ In addition, William Caxton, in the mode of bookseller, recognizes Lady Margaret's predilection for devotional works when he writes in the prologue to the secular romance *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, translated and printed by him at the 'commaundement [of] the right noble, puyssaunt and excellent pryncesse [...] Lady Margaret', that 'gentyl yonge ladyes and damoysellys' can just as easily learn

²⁰ Fisher, 'A Mornyng Remembraunce', pp. 294–95. Lady Margaret met John Fisher in 1494 or 1495 and he became her confessor while he held office at Cambridge University. It was a mutually beneficial relationship: Lady Margaret gained an important advisor and confessor, and Fisher an influential patron and supporter. It is generally accepted that he encouraged her to focus her support on Cambridge rather than Oxford. See Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 202–32.

²¹ Taylor, 'Into His Secret Chamber', p. 48.

to be 'stedfaste and constaunt' from reading in ancient histories as they can in occupying themselves and studying 'overmoche in bokes of contemplacion'.²² Caxton uses Lady Margaret in this prologue to promote his work and style her as patron and reader of the text in order to encourage sales to readers who are emulating her taste in books.²³ Indeed, the devotional texts that Caxton resisted publishing were taken up by the perhaps more commercially minded printers Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde, who regularly represented themselves as Lady Margaret's printer in their prologues. Studies show that devotional works comprise the largest subject category in the surviving output of the English printers and, as Susan Powell has noted, books that Lady Margaret owned, commissioned, gifted, and translated are almost exclusively religious works.²⁴ Margaret's household accounts show that in 1506 she paid Richard Pynson for fifty books, very likely copies of her translation of *The Mirroure of Golde*, which, along with other books she bought or commissioned from English printers, were circulated in her household.²⁵ Providing edifying literature to the people in her retinue demonstrates the extent to which the public and devotional strands of Lady Margaret's life overlapped and offers a concrete example of the influence she exerted on her household's reading practices.

Accounts of reading and records of book ownership, however, can only provide a framework for examining habits of reading. In order to discover how a book may have been used, and to understand, to some extent, the experience of reading it, we must look to the book itself. The tradition of offering instructions on reading in devotional books produced for lay readers goes back centuries. An important early example for later aristocratic female readers was a set of edited prayers by Anselm of Canterbury produced in 1104 for Matilda, Countess of Tuscany who, like Lady Margaret, was a laywoman with ecclesiastical ties. Anselm's collection shows that even at this early date the clergy were invested in providing specific instructions to lay readers for how a book was meant to be read following monastic examples. The preface to the collection begins:

Placuit celsitudini vestrae ut Orationes, quas diversis fratribus secundum singulorum petitionem edidi, sibi mitterem. In quibus quamvis quaedam sint quae ad

²² Caxton's *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, ed. by Kellner, p. 1.

²³ For an in-depth discussion of Caxton's prologue as it pertains to women's textual production, see Summit, 'William Caxton'.

²⁴ See Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p. 4, and Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort', pp. 199–200.

²⁵ Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 183. Also see Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, pp. 124–25.

vestram personam non pertinent, omnes tamen volui mittere, ut, si cui placuerint, de hoc exemplari eas possit accipere. Quae quoniam ad excitandam legentis mentem ad Dei amorem vel timorem seu ad suimet discussionem sunt editae, non sunt legendae cursim vel velociter, sed paulatim cum itenta et morosa meditatione. Nec debet intendere lector quamlibet earum totam legere, sed tantum quantum ad excitandum affectum orandi, ad quod factae sunt, sentit sibi sufficere.

(It has seemed good to your highness that I should send you these prayers, which I edited at the request of several brothers. Some of them are not appropriate to you, but I want to send them all, so that if you like them you may be able to compose others after their example. They are arranged so that by reading them the mind may be stirred up either to the love or fear of God, or to a consideration of both; so they should not be read cursorily or quickly, but little by little, with attention to meditation. It is not intended that a reader should feel impelled to read the whole, but only as much as will stir up the affections to prayer; so as much as does that, think it be sufficient to you.)²⁶

Two important ideas emerge from these instructions: first, that the reader is able to discern 'appropriate' passages for herself (and even, it seems, by herself), and to use those she likes as a model for further composition; and second, that reading should be conducted slowly, as a form of meditation, including the invitation to stop when 'stirred up' to thoughts of God in order to pray. From early medieval devotional literature, then, we see that lay reading could be considered an autonomous act. The reading experience described here is modelled on the monastic *lectio divina* tradition, operating as a means of inducing meditation, which is programmed by the reader according to her own spiritual needs and signalled by the words on the page. This is precisely the kind of reading encouraged by the *Festis*, discussed below by Innes-Parker. Mary Carruthers, in her extensive and instrumental work on the art and craft of memory, suggests that literary composition starts with memory; that is, it is the recollection of images, read, as Anselm says, 'little by little' (paulatim) with attention to accuracy, for the purpose of contemplation, that inspires further composition.²⁷ For Carruthers, the art of memory made knowledge into useful experience and enabled one to combine these experiences to form ideas or judgements and so she posits a strong connection between the rhetorical and the compositional art of memory.

²⁶ *Sancti Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi*, ed. by Schmitt, III, 4; trans. into English in Anselm, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm*, trans. by Ward, p. 90. For more on selective reading, see the essay by Uselmann in this volume.

²⁷ Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* and Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*.

The meditative role of lay devotional reading continued to be important in later medieval writings. It is highlighted in Nicholas Love's *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*, a popular translation of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* made in 1410, in which a similar connection between memory and meditation (itself a form of composition) is described for the growing lay audience in the early fifteenth-century context of politicized religious reading. Instructions ask the reader to make present that which she or he reads:

Wherefore thou that coueytest to fele treuly the fruyt of this book, thou most with all thi thought & alle thin entent, in that manere make the in thi soule present to thoo thinges that bene here writen seyde or done of oure lord Jesu, & that bisily, likyngly & abydyngly as thei thou herdest hem with thi bodily eres or sey thaim with thin eyen don puttyng away for the tyme, & leuyng alle other occupaciouns & bisynesses.²⁸

It is, perhaps, obvious to note that the necessary faculty that will draw the reader towards the extreme affective piety that the text demands is memory recall. The reader uses his or her memory, recalling his or her reading and knowledge, and building on familiar, sensual images, to imagine in the mind the scenes presented in this text. Memory works with reading to actualize the meditative process. As Laurelle Levert explains:

Successful recollection requires recopying the sensory and emotional composition which constructed the image in the first place, or in at least remembering, perhaps as a sensory 'imprint', the sensation or feeling that first accompanied the event. [...] Emphasis is placed on the concrete and physical rather than on the abstract and incorporeal, on imagining as an act of creation which encompasses other experiences and memories, and re-creates a new yet analogous image.²⁹

This imagined presence required the use of memory: signs and images that evoke what is absent. As pioneering memory scholar Frances Yates observes, scholastic precepts for the work of memory, following Thomas Aquinas, required students to assume 'corporeal similitudes' with the text such that 'spiritual intentions' would not slip easily from the soul because things 'are better remembered in corporeal form'; memory is strengthened by linking it to the body and bodily metaphors.³⁰ Similar techniques of a mind-body association

²⁸ Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. by Sargent, pp. 12–13.

²⁹ LeVert, "Crucifye hem, Crucifye hem", p. 79.

³⁰ Yates, *The Art of Memory*, p. 75. Her study is an in-depth analysis of ancient rhetorics adopted by the Middle Ages.

with the text are required of the reader of *The Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf* so that reading becomes not only a form of memorization (of both word and meaning) but also a means of invention, as Levert describes.

Carruthers makes an important distinction between remembering something in its exact reproduction, or rote memorization, and remembering its reconstruction in the memory, or its substance, and puts these into context with respect to medieval education.³¹ Medieval schoolboys were taught foundational texts twice by rote; the first time, students learned only the sounds of the words and a second time they learned to attach meaning and commentary to those sounds. Rote learning laid 'a firm foundation for all further education' by providing the student/reader with a 'mnemonically secure inventory [...] into which additional matter could be stored and thence recovered'.³² In other words, a memorial foundation of learned material gave readers a basis from which to read, understand, and store further information. The advantage to mnemonic learning, Carruthers teaches us, is not so much as a device for rote memorization as it is a 'collecting mechanism [...] with which to construct one's own education'.³³

The traditional meditative model for lay readers, from Anselm's prayers to *The Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*, is altered in *The Mirroure of Golde* to account for the dual role of the translator-reader. The reader of *The Mirroure of Golde* is not given explicit instructions for reading or ruminating on the text. Instead, the reader is shown how a text can train the memory through repetition of its lessons and constructions of physical similitudes such that memory training becomes more an act of reading and less an act of creative visualization. That Fisher thought Lady Margaret's good memory was a mark of a learned mind is evident in his 'remembraunce' of her. He describes her as a woman

of singuler wysedome ferre passynge the comyn rate of women, she was good in remembraunce & of holdyng memorye. A redy wytte she had also to conceyve all thynges. Albeit they were ryght derke, right studyous she was in bokes whiche she hadde in grete nombre both in Englysshe & in Frensshe, & for her exercyse & for the prouffyte of other she dyde translate dyvers maters of devocyon out of Frensshe into Englysshe.³⁴

³¹ Carruthers, 'The Poet as Master Builder'.

³² Carruthers, 'The Poet as Master Builder', p. 888.

³³ Carruthers, 'The Poet as Master Builder', p. 888.

³⁴ Fisher, 'A Mornyng Remembraunce', pp. 291–92.

Lady Margaret's memory, or her ability to memorize a text, marks her as educated, even 'studyous', and that 'wysedom' connects her private reading with an education gained solely from books. The ability of her mind to engage with texts in numerous ways is highlighted here, primarily for the profit they bring to her own devotional exercises as well as those of others. Her book ownership, reading, and translation activities work together to illustrate her studious, pious nature. While the focus of *The Mirroure of Golde* remains spiritual instruction, Fisher's comments note the way in which this translation functions as an 'exercyse' for memory. In Carruthers's terms, it is a memory tool for constructing one's own education. What Lady Margaret undertook 'for her exercyse' becomes an exercise for her readers, a faculty that improves the memory and develops 'a redy wytte [...] to conceyve all thynges'. As we shall see, the book applies the structures of scholasticism beyond the universities to an audience of readers, including women, barred from educational institutions, that they might also 'prouffyte' from its lessons, both in spiritual guidance and in reading.

The constant exhortations to the reader throughout the text to 'remembre' and to 'rede' locate the work of memory firmly within a milieu of learning and literacy, a milieu to which the book gestures at its outset. It begins:

This present boke is called the Mirroure of golde to the sinfull soule, the whiche hath ben translated at parice oute of laten in to frensshe. And after the translacion seen and corrected at length of many clarkis, Doctours and maisters in divinite, and nowe of late translated oute of frenche in to Englisshe by the right exellent princesse Margaret, moder to our soverain lorde kinge Henry the vii, and Countess of Richmond & derby.³⁵

The text includes Lady Margaret's role in its provenance alongside 'many clarkis, Doctours and maisters in divinite', conferring upon her a similar authority as the mediator of a learned work. In fact, she is able to inhabit an authoritative 'I' in translating the author's words:

I have willed to make and accomplishe this present trecty, gathering and assembling many diverse auctorites of holy doctours of the churche, to thentent that the pore synfull soulle, troubled by the fraude of enmey and oft overcome, may by holy monicions and auctorites be addressed to the light of justice and trouth. (sig. A.ii^r)

³⁵ *The Mirroure of Golde to the Synfulle Soule*, trans. by Beaufort, sig. A.ii^r. References are to page numbers in a medieval hand. The orthography has been lightly modernized; punctuation is mine. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

In her role as translator Lady Margaret becomes not only a master of at least two languages but also of the relevant 'auctorites' on the text's content; of a certain measure of the care of souls; and of the text's doctrinal and literary principles.³⁶ The prologue of *The Mirroure of Golde* locates Lady Margaret — publicly known for her 'bookishness' — as a learned authority in control of 'bookish' material that creates a connection between reading and the care of the soul.

Indeed, the prologue instructs readers on the correct approach to the book by setting up an affinity between its chapters, reading practice, and the reader's soul:

And for to know the order and maner howe to procede in this lytell boke: it is to knowe it shalbe devided in vii chapitours after the vii dayes of the weke to thentent that the synfull soule, solyed and defowlyd by synne, maye in every chapitoure have a newe face of his soule. (sig. B.ii^v)

The structure of the text is designed as a key to spiritual reformation and education. In this configuration one's reading will be internalized and then reflected outwards in one's more pious behaviour. The chapter divisions provide a daily schedule of reading while also encouraging the readers to reflect the lessons of the text in their own daily lives.

Yet these lessons do not encourage the reader to remember in order to imaginatively recreate the passion scene, for example. Throughout the book the readers are continually being directed to read other authorities, and other books, as a means of supporting the lessons at hand. The lesson on 'Howe lechery causeth many evelles to come to man' reminds readers of biblical examples of the topic:

We rede also of many [who] were slayne by cause of the lechery comytted with the womon of levite as it apperith in the xx Chapitour of the booke of Jugis. And a man was slayne for the lechery of absolon his brother forsomoche that he had defouled Thamar his suster, as it apperith in the secounde boke of kingis in the x chaptour. (sig. B.i^r, [emphasis mine])

Biblical and patristic references here underscore the central place of Christian teachings in spiritual health, while focus on the act of reading invites the *Mirroure's* audience into this space of learning. If each chapter of *The Mirroure of Golde* is intended to reveal 'a newe face of his soule' the intertextual references reinforce the lessons and expand the reader's textual framework, bringing her into a learned community of scholars. The reader is not asked to visualize episodes of Christ's life, for example, and to meditate on images created from her

³⁶ For the formal aspects of medieval academic lectures and prologues see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*.

own experience; rather, the reader of *The Mirrour of Golde* reads and re-reads lessons compiled from biblical and patristic authorities, and is encouraged to recall those authorities as she reads:

Remembre the that thou arte man and that thonour of the worlde is the veray let-tyng of grace and that, worse is, it is the losse of eternall helth where have we *rede* of any puttyng their delit(s) in the worlde here. (sig. G.i^v, [emphasis mine])

Reading and recalling textual authorities, then, becomes a practical way of emulating a spiritual life for those without the leisure time of Lady Margaret Beaufort. The reader puts into practice the lessons of the text by reading, understanding, and memorizing those lessons. Originally written for a lay audience, the text nonetheless assumes a commitment to reading and learning by its audience. The fact that Lady Margaret not only translated this particular work but had it printed suggests that she saw it as a way to gain insights into a scholarly world unavailable to many of her readers.

Lady Margaret was able to use her wealth and influence to access this scholarly world. Her female sex, however, made her exceptional and may have placed her in a unique position with respect to her translation of *The Mirrour of Golde*. Chapter One, 'Of the vilenes and myserie of man', uses a familiar motif to locate the origins of sin firmly in the lap of women, reminding the translator and the readers that women's bodies engendered humanity's misery. The chapter begins:

The prophete Jeremie consideringe the freylte and myserie of mankynde by maner of lamentacion in wrytyng saith thus: Alas I poore creature wherefore was I borne *out of the wombe of my moder* to se the labour & sorowe of this world & to consume my dayes in confusion. Alas if this holy man Jeremie, the whiche almighty god sanctified *in the wombe of his moder*, he him self said & profered so piteous words: What may I say that am engendred & conceived *in the wombe of my moder by synne*. (sig. B.iii^v, [emphasis mine])

As a female translator and reader Lady Margaret inhabits different positions in the text. Like Jeremiah she is 'borne out of the wombe of [her] moder' and unlike Jeremiah she is also the 'moder' who bears the 'poore creature'. As a lay reader Lady Margaret would be accustomed to this kind of antifeminist rhetoric but as a translator she is aligned with those who wrote it, and complicit in disseminating it.³⁷ The text goes on to state that man is

³⁷ As Innes-Parker shows in her examination of the positive female (and male) biblical models in Bodleian MS Holkham Misc. 41, antifeminist rhetoric is not the only strategy for

A thyng vile, stinkyng, detestable and abhomynable conceyved in the fylthe rotennes of flesshe & stynkyng fylthy concupiscence and in theimbracement of stinkyng lechery & that worse is conceyved in the unclene sport of synne. & yf thou beholde & consyder well what mete thou art norisshed *within thy moders wombe*, truly noon other but with corrupt & infect blod as well is knowen by many phylosophers & other great clerk(s). & after thy nativite thou that haste ben norisshed of so foule & vile nature *in thy moders wombe as bfore is said*: thou art also ordeined to weping(s) & crying(s) & to many other misries in the exile of this sorowfull worlde. (sig. B.iv^r, [emphasis mine])

The repetition of 'moders womb' reveals another aspect of Lady Margaret's complicity: as a mother she is a progenitor of sin, conceiving and nourishing the corrupt human body within the vessel of her own body. Lady Margaret is identified in the prologue as 'Margaret moder to oure soverain lorde kinge Henry the vii' (sig. A.ii^r). In fact, her public identity revolved around ideals of motherhood, both metaphorical and literal: as a patron, Fisher describes her as a 'moder' to the 'studyentes of bothe the unyversytees' and her customary title in the realm, 'Our Lady the King's Mother', celebrated her as a matriarch.³⁸ Contemporary readers of the text would not fail to make this connection between Lady Margaret as mother of the king and woman as mother of sin; this is the vexed position she inhabits as reader and translator of this text, and indeed it reflects the vexed position that all women inhabit. In this context, *The Mirrour of Golde's* antifeminist rhetoric points to its women readers as especially in need of the ministrations of the text, not because their bodies necessarily mark them as *more* sinful than men, but because their bodies identify them with the king's mother, who is herself susceptible to sin.³⁹ However, as patron and translator, Lady Margaret engenders in the text another view of conception and birth: that is, nourishing the souls of the text's readers through her textual

writers of devotional works, particularly in reference to the female body and its capacity for original sin. In contrast to the focus on the sin inherent in the pregnant female body that is typical of much late medieval devotional writing, Innes-Parker demonstrates that such bodily images instead invoke the nurturing of Christ in the Marian body as a metaphor for the cleansing of a reader's heart and soul.

³⁸ Fisher, 'A Mornyng Remembraunce', p. 301.

³⁹ It must be noted that the male readers of *The Mirrour of Golde* are also considered in need of the salvation the text provides, i.e. as susceptible to sin as women. In fact, the address is usually made to a perceived male reader. I do not mean to imply that the text addresses men and women differently in terms of their need for the spiritual aid of the text, simply that the text's mandate allows for an audience that includes, perhaps even invites, readers of both genders, because men, as well as women, are born from their mother's womb and inherit the taint of sin.

labours. If the reader is invited to compare himself or herself with the patron of the text — a noblewoman known for her austere orthodox piety — the reader's own shortcomings are highlighted, along with their need to take up the book; in other words, if Lady Margaret read and translated *The Mirrour of Golde* for the care of her soul, certainly those readers whose daily lives do not involve a strict program of devotional rituals should do so as well. Here the reader identifies with the humanity of the translator and is drawn into reading as a way to emulate the nobility, whose greater access to scholarly learning and devotional books and practices could make the pursuit of pious living successful and achievable. Lady Margaret is an example of this success, demonstrating that laypeople — even women — are capable of understanding the text's lessons and participating in developing wisdom akin to Lady Margaret's, which, in Fisher's terms, far surpassed the common rate of women.

* * *

It has been my aim in this essay to review the intellectual component in the exercise of devotional reading, an aspect that can get lost, especially as we consider the participation of a female audience with restricted access to literacy and education. Devotional reading is most often considered in terms of the reader's ability to visualize and dramatize for herself the events in the text. Taylor notes that this kind of reading is not unlike erotic reading, 'since both cultivate the habit of extensive fantasizing on short passages, and encourage readers to visualize the events in vivid and intimate terms'.⁴⁰ This is reading as a kind of physicalized act, one that can account for differing levels of literacy since the reader can meditate freely on passages she has read, passages read to her, or even images that reflect passages in a text. *The Mirrour of Golde*, however, depends on levels of literacy that presume a familiarity with written authorities and the apparatus of the book. At the same time that the reader is being asked to consider the health of her soul, she is also being asked to consider other books, other readings, and other authorities and to understand the structure of her soul in terms of chapters in a book. The work of memory that began as an educational discipline in monastic and cathedral schools is, after all, a memory for texts, not events. The process of repetition and corporeal identification that seems to mark the experience of reading *The Mirrour of Golde* borrows from a program of formal training aimed to steep the reader's mind in the text. The texts of Innes-Parker's study, the *Consolacio* and the *Festis*, were written by and/or for

⁴⁰ Taylor, 'Into his Secret Chamber', p. 44.

nuns and perform a similar function within a female monastic context — an enclosed environment. By contrast, Lady Margaret's translation opens a window on scholastic learning and makes it available to a larger lay audience, using her own subject position as female reader, translator, and patron to encourage her readers both to identify with her frail humanity and to emulate her pious nobility.⁴¹ Through these identifications the audience becomes part of a larger community of pious lay readers who, like Lady Margaret, could make use of monastic and clerical knowledge to improve their spiritual life — to engender not vile sin through their humanity, but pious living through their devotional reading.

The essays in this cluster on modelling devotional readers all demonstrate that late medieval English spiritual writings negotiated the complex relationships among the many participants in textual production and reception. The traditional model of male monastic author and spiritual guide to the obedient female reader survives in theory, but often this model is revised to account for a diversity in roles and practices. Yet at the same time that we see a growing respect for female participation we also note that antifeminist rhetoric and the use of the male universal exemplum are still widespread. This kind of give and take reveals the multiplicity of subject positions existing in late medieval England. This multiplicity, as the essays here demonstrate, allowed a space for readers, translators, authors, printers, patrons, and others to collaborate more actively in the representations of exempla and think more consciously about the influence of these models on the spiritual formation of the readers. The didactic nature of the devotional tradition ensured that traditional and orthodox standards remained; yet in the emerging world of print we can find the potential for transformative conversations where the voices from the margins can be heard.

⁴¹ Carlson's study of Pynson's *Life of St Radegund* in this volume makes comparable claims for identifying Radegund with royal Tudor women and from them to the larger lay audience.

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BODLEIAN LIBRARY MS HOLKHAM MISCELLANY 41 AND THE MODELLING OF WOMEN'S DEVOTION

Catherine Innes-Parker

The essays in this section of the collection examine models of and for readers in three different manuscript/print contexts, showing some remarkable similarities in their treatment of gendered exemplars. My essay illustrates the use of male and female biblical models in a manuscript written for and by women religious; Carlson's essay considers representations of married queenship — including early Tudor royal women — as models for lay piety in a printed hagiography; and Morley's examines Lady Margaret Beaufort's dual activities as reader-translator of devotional instructional texts, not only as a means of identification with the lay pious print audience but also as a means of bringing scholastic learning to the vernacular audience. All of these models offer nuanced portrayals of gender that acknowledge an increasingly active role for women in the production and reception of devotional texts. Moreover, these essays reveal the complexities of the ways in which writers, scribes, printers, and translators negotiated with their patrons, readers, and audiences.

The subject of my contribution is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Holkham Miscellany 41; this is a little-known and seldom-studied manuscript which has much to tell us about the legacy of Middle English devotional literature for women.¹ This deluxe fifteenth-century manuscript contains only three texts:

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the unique copy of *The festis and the passion of oure lord Ihesu Crist*, written by an anonymous woman; a brief lyric, *Syke and sorowe depely* (IMEV 3102); and a Middle English version of William Flete's *De remediis contra temptationes*, here entitled *Consolacio anime*.² Both the prose texts are addressed to women readers, suggesting that the manuscript was written for (and/or commissioned by) a wealthy woman patron. These texts reveal a process of adaptation and redaction that reflects the attitudes of both male and female authors and readers; in the case of *Consolacio anime* (hereafter *Consolacio*), the translation and later adaptation of a male-authored text for a female audience and, in the case of *The festis and the passion of oure lord Ihesu Crist* (hereafter *Festis*), a female-authored text that shows a broad familiarity with the major devotional texts of its day.³

Both texts are intended to encourage their female reader(s), but that encouragement comes in vastly different forms. *Festis* focuses on the reader's relationship with Christ, and provides a meditative prayer cycle that follows him from birth to death, with strong female characters from the Bible functioning as role models for the female reader. Christ is on centre-stage, and the supporting figures allow the reader to compare her behaviour and attitude to their individual responses, and also encourage her affective response to Christ's life and death. Female models are applied directly to the reader; male models tend to represent the community of the church or, if they are applied individually, negative responses to Christ. *Consolacio*, in contrast, uses few models for the reader, rely-

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² There is some controversy about the title of the first text, largely because the line in which the author names it is almost illegible, due to heavy damage to the first page. The word in question could be *feitis* (deeds), or *festis* (commemorative holy days). *Feitis* seems to make more sense, and I used that title in my previous article on this text. However, in the first prayer of the cycle, the author refers to magnifying Christ in his *festes*, having in mind his *grete dedes* (p. 9), suggesting that the title should, indeed, be *festis*. See *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. by Barratt, pp. 205–18; 'Remedies against Temptations', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, pp. 210–40; Pollard, 'Bodleian MS Holkham Misc. 41', pp. 43–53; Tarvers, 'Gender, Text, Critic', pp. 229–41; and Innes-Parker, 'Anchoritic Elements of Holkham Misc. 41', pp. 172–81.

³ The manuscript has been paginated in a modern hand, and I have followed this pagination, rather than the earlier foliation, which is incomplete due to the loss of several folios (possibly an entire gathering). Neither text has been edited from this manuscript. All references to *Festis* are to my own transcription of the text. All references to *Consolacio* are to the edition of the same Middle English version of Flete's *De remediis* in Cambridge University Libraries MS Hh.i.11, 'Remedies against Temptations', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, pp. 210–40, the only published edition of this version of the text.

ing instead on instruction, advice and examples of the kinds of tribulation that the reader might encounter and the remedies for each one. The role models that do occur are overwhelmingly male, and although the message of the text is intended to be gender-neutral, the author slips easily into representing the masculine as normative and definitive.

Nevertheless, the way in which the manuscript is structured makes it possible for the reader to develop confidence in her own role as devotee, applying models of women who have loving relationships to Christ directly to her own experience through her reading of *Festis*. The more negative experience of temptation and tribulation is expressed by *Consolacio* in more general terms, gendered as masculine and applied broadly to the Christian experience. These models are not as intimate as those in *Festis* and allow the reader to overcome the barriers of sin and temptation without becoming defined by them. *Consolacio* guides the reader through the trials of ordinary human experience, and brings her back to meditation on the loving Christ whose passion has ensured her salvation.

In what follows, I will introduce the texts and their authors and then explore male and female models in both texts. In each section, I will conclude with an examination of a role model whose story occurs in both texts (Peter and the Woman Taken in Adultery) in order to show how *Festis* rewrites the gendered sentiments that dominated the world-view of the fifteenth-century church, while still remaining firmly within the biblical and sacramental world of fifteenth-century devotion.

The Texts and their Authors

The opening text, *Festis*, was written by an enclosed woman for a 'religious sister' (p. 1), also enclosed.⁴ Pollard suggests that the text is the product of an enclosed order, probably Bridgettine. He further argues that the manuscript was produced at Syon Abbey, and proposes Joanna North (Abbess of Syon 1421–33) as a possible author.⁵ If he is correct, then the Holkham manuscript must have been copied fairly close to the time of composition, and in fact Pollard suggests that it may have been made as a presentation copy by a religious for a patron.⁶

⁴ See Pollard, 'Bodleian MS Holkham Misc. 41', p. 45, '*Remedies against Temptations*', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, p. 218, and *Women's Writing*, ed. by Barratt, p. 205.

⁵ Tarvers argues in 'Gender, Text, Critic', less convincingly, that the manuscript originated in or around Norfolk (p. 230). If Pollard is correct, it is likely that the scribe, too, was a woman.

⁶ Pollard, 'Bodleian MS Holkham Misc. 41', p. 43.

Indeed, it is possible that *Festis* itself was commissioned for this manuscript, perhaps by a widow retiring into religious seclusion. Unfortunately, however, since the manuscript itself gives no indication of its medieval provenance, this can only be conjecture (if well-founded conjecture).

Nevertheless, some indications of the nature of both author and audience can be drawn from the text itself. The author of *Festis* is clearly a well-educated, Latin-literate female religious who is familiar with the Vulgate and can handle liturgical Latin quotations with ease.⁷ She is thoroughly versed in the contemplative life and clearly feels qualified to guide others in that life, including both her reader and herself in the ranks of those who, like Mary, have chosen solitude and meditation (pp. 38–41). Yet, the author is not entirely solitary; she is clearly in a position of authority, suggesting that she and her reader(s) lived in an enclosed community, rather than solitary anchorhouses, and she prays for God's help in fulfilling her duties: 'O goode god yeue grace þat I may helpe to bere youre cros: þat is to say mekli to bere for your loue alle heuy birthenys of charge þat fallith to me' (p. 65).⁸ At the same time, she includes herself among those who preach and teach Christ's words (p. 23), and speaks of her writing, thinking, and speaking as Christ's work, rather than her own, asserting that both her contemplative life and her authority are given by God, and can never be taken away:

And myhtful lord I beseche yow sithin I am not worthi to preise yow, make me worthi and able ther to; & youre owyn goodnesse preise, blisse, & magnifie yow in me, so þat what euere I write, thinke, or speke, of yow, & for yow, be it youre werk, & not myn. And seie to me, & to alle þat haue for sake the worlde for yow, as ye seide to Martha of Maudeleyne: þat we haue chose þe betir partye, þat neuere schal be benomyn us. (p. 41)

In spite of the conventional humility topos, she is self-assured and confident in her writing.

Similarly, prayer, although undertaken in solitude, has a communal aspect, and the reader is urged to take her fellow Christians with her as she prays:

⁷ For a detailed discussion of the authorial voice, see Innes-Parker, 'Anchoritic Elements of Holkham Misc. 41', pp. 173–74. On the author's Latin literacy, see '*Remedies against Temptations*', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, p. 211.

⁸ In my transcription of the text, I have silently emended the punctuation and expanded the scribe's abbreviations (underlining the inserted letters). I have used <> brackets to indicate where the text is unclear and I have incorporated what I believe to be the correct readings.

Also I write in diuers places, vs and we, for ye schulde at swich places take youre euen cristen with yow in youre preieres. For whan we preie for us self, it plesith god gretli that we take oure euen cristen with us. (pp. 91–92)

Throughout the meditations the voice of the author and reader are merged in prayer; indeed, the author asks, 'whanne ye ben in soule presentli with yowre spouse that is Ihesu god and man takith me with yow in yowre preieres' (p. 3), suggesting that even contemplative union with Christ can be shared with her spiritual sisters. The goal of prayer is always this union of the soul with its heavenly spouse, a union that the author herself has experienced, and that she expects her reader to achieve through the teachings of her text.

Festis is a meditative prayer cycle focusing on the life and passion of Christ. It is formally structured, consisting of a prologue, a general confession, a series of prayers, and an epilogue.⁹ At the head of each prayer is a Pater Noster and an Ave. Each prayer begins with a thanksgiving, commemorating an incident from Christ's life, followed by a meditative prayer that draws out the devotional meaning for the reader. Unlike conventional guidance literature for women, this text encourages its readers to move beyond the textual guidance that it offers, from reading to meditation, for inward prayer brings more comfort and union with God than prayer 'by the book'. The author thus encourages the independent thought and private spiritual growth necessary for advanced religious practitioners: in the end, the goal of the prayer cycle seems to be to make itself obsolete as its readers progress beyond its pages to interior prayer:

I wolde ye couden the sentence wit outyn þe book, for an<d y>e so coude, ye schulden fele mochil more comforth & vnyon in god, to seye it so inforth, than for to seie it be scripture. (p. 98)

The second text in the manuscript, *Consolacio*, is the last in a long series of translations and adaptations of William Flete's *De remediis contra temptationes*. We know considerably more about this text than we do about *Festis*. The original Latin treatise was written by Flete in England sometime before 1359, and addressed to an audience of Austin Friars.¹⁰ It is a practical piece of pastoralia,

⁹ The text as it survives contains fifty-four prayers, two of which are incomplete. Unfortunately, a section is missing in the middle (between pages 64 and 65), where the text skips from Jesus washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper to the bearing of the cross. It is, therefore, impossible to tell how many prayers were included in the original text.

¹⁰ See 'Remedies against temptations', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, p. 203; Hackett, 'William Flete', pp. 69–80; Hackett, 'William Flete and the *De remediis contra temptationes*', pp. 330–48; and Hackett, Colledge, and Chadwick, 'William Flete's *De remediis contra temptationes*', pp. 210–30.

described by Hackett as 'sober, restrained, sympathetic and grounded on sound theological and psychological principles',¹¹ intended to teach those who were charged with transmitting doctrine to others. The text was translated into Middle English early in its career, with three surviving 'families'. The first two families, ME I and ME II, appear to be independent translations.

The third family, ME III, to which *Consolacio* belongs, is a heavily expanded version of ME II, which Hackett describes as 'a far cry' from Flete's original text.¹² Much of the alteration to the text reflects the tradition of Middle English devotional texts addressed to women readers. ME III adds an address to a 'dere sister' and several long interpolations, including the opening metaphor of God as a parent who chastises his children, which is expanded later in the text into the metaphor of God as a mother (borrowed either from *Ancrene Wisse* or the *Stimulus amoris*). As Colledge and Chadwick describe it, it is the 'last and most exuberant' version, 'a highly charged piece of affective writing', which is 'the work of a trained and skilled academic'.¹³ This scholar is, of course, unknown, but it is interesting to note that of the five manuscripts in which this text survives, three (Holkham Misc. 41, Harley 1706, and Cambridge University Library Hh.i.11) were almost certainly copied in women's houses by female scribes and a fourth, Trinity College Dublin A. 6. 12 (154), was also likely made for a female owner.¹⁴

In many ways *Festis* and *Consolacio* are typical of late medieval vernacular devotional literature, drawing on the canon of spiritual writings from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries produced for a female audience and addressing

¹¹ Hackett, 'William Flete', p. 79.

¹² Hackett, 'William Flete and the *De remediis*', p. 341, cited in '*Remedies against Temptations*', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, pp. 204–05. ME III survives in five fifteenth-century manuscripts, and was printed by de Worde in 1508 and again in 1519. There are also three seventeenth-century manuscripts based on Augustine Baker's modernized rendition of the 1519 de Worde edition ('*Remedies against Temptations*', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, pp. 205–12).

¹³ '*Remedies against Temptations*', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, p. 205.

¹⁴ As noted above, Pollard situates Holkham Misc. 41 at Syon, and if he is correct, the scribe, as well as the author and addressee, was likely a Syon nun. BL, MS Harley 1706 was likely copied at Barking for its later owner, the Countess of Oxford, and part of it was probably copied from Bodleian, MS Douce 322, given by William Baron to Petronilla Wrottesly, an enclosed Dominican nun at Dartford. Cambridge University Library, MS Hh.1.11 was copied in a female community, probably an East Anglian nunnery. Dublin, Trinity College, MS A.6.12 contains only Flete's treatise and extracts from Rolle's *Form of Living*, suggesting a female owner. Only one manuscript, Worcester Cathedral, MS F.172, can be identified as belonging to a male owner ('*Remedies against Temptations*', ed. by Colledge and Chadwick, pp. 206–12).

the key concerns of piety for their day.¹⁵ Both texts attempt to model women's devotion in a variety of ways, including prayers and devotions, advice, exhortation, and consolation. Indeed, the two texts have much in common, presenting a benign and encouraging posture to their female readers. While they urge self-examination, and encourage prayer as the means of recognizing and resisting temptation, they also encourage their readers not to become overwhelmed by the fear of sin, but to focus on the prayer and meditation that will lead to union with Christ — all of which reflect the concerns of many fifteenth-century texts.

Nevertheless, the two texts vary significantly in tone and in the degree of confidence and independence that they attempt to instil in their female readers. Both come out of a similar context of supplying female religious with spiritual readings and offering a positive portrayal of the contemplative life, and both illustrate the ways in which these treatises circulated. Yet, the *Festis*, a female-authored work, takes an intimate, collaborative approach with its audience to provide material for meditation, while *Consolacio* uses its male academic authority to instruct the reader in dealing with adversity. The differences are particularly evident in the use of biblical models: while *Consolacio* is dominated by positive male biblical exempla, *Festis* is dominated by positive female exempla, applied to the reader in intimate detail.

This divergence offers a particularly effective means of examining how gender is exploited by both authors and readers. Flete's text has been translated and adapted at least twice to produce the recension found here, and thus reflects the authorial stance not only of its original writer but also of at least two translators and/or redactors, and their attention to their perceived audiences. Furthermore, *Consolacio* reflects the 'reading' of translators/redactors who were probably part of that audience. Similarly, the anonymous woman who wrote *Festis* must be considered not only as an author, but also as a reader and interpreter of male-authored devotional literature.¹⁶ Her manipulation of gendered imagery and models, particularly when compared with *Consolacio*, reveals striking, and sometimes surprising, evidence about the attitudes of

¹⁵ For example, *Ancrene Wisse*, *Stimulus amoris*, *A Talkyng of the Love of God*, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, and the works of Rolle, Hilton, and Bonaventure. Flete's work also shows some interaction with *The Chastising of God's Children*, although it is difficult to know in which direction the influence flows, as both *Chastising* and the Middle English translations of Flete were likely composed in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. See Hackett, Colledge, and Chadwick, 'Remedies against Temptations', pp. 228–29.

¹⁶ My point here is comparable to Morley's argument about Lady Margaret Beaufort as a translator and reader of her text. However, it appears that the *Festis* author adapted more freely the gendered models of her sources than Beaufort did.

women readers in the fifteenth century and how they interpreted the texts written for and about them, often calling into question conventional attitudes about women and women's piety. A comparison of the ways in which each author uses role models, and, in particular, biblical models illustrates not only the uniquely empowering view of women in *Festis* but also how the very structure of the manuscript itself enables the reader to use the positive view of women found in *Festis* to challenge the more conventional view reflected in *Consolacio*. In order to clarify such challenges, in the following comparison of biblical role models I will begin with the more conventional usage of *Consolacio* before turning to the more innovative *Festis*.

Male Models in Consolacio anime and The Festis and the Passion of oure Lord Ihesu Crist

There are very few models, indeed very few anecdotes or *exempla* at all, in Flete's Latin text.¹⁷ The models in the original are all taken from the Bible, and are all male. Most of these are retained unaltered in ME III (and therefore *Consolacio*). In Chapter 4, the reader is reminded of God's servants Tobias (whose will is proved by temptation), and Job (who receives benefits as well as tribulation from God, p. 224). Job reappears in Chapter 5, where Christ says to Peter that Satan has asked that he might sift him as one sifts wheat. Like Job, Peter shows that the fiend cannot tempt God's servant without God's permission; yet, the reader is reminded, the more wheat is cast from side to side in a sieve, the cleaner it is. Similarly, the more a person is troubled by the fiend, the cleaner they will be before God. Temptation is allowed by God for the good of the soul. This passage is followed by a reminder that no one can withstand the fiend without God's help, and that God sends help in the form of brethren who have withstood temptation and whose hearts are filled with patience. The good counsel of a brother or sister is compared to the words of Solomon and David, reminding the reader to trust in God (pp. 229–30).

The original treatise also includes brief metaphorical descriptions of God: as a gardener who weeds the garden of the soul when the soil is made moist by the tears of contrition (p. 228); as a father who ensures that the sharp vexations of temptation and tribulation will not harm his children (p. 229); and as a loving

¹⁷ As Hackett (somewhat condescendingly) puts it: 'The style is straightforward and devoid of the imagery and anecdotage that mar the otherwise useful and indeed valuable works of medieval writers on the vices and virtues' ('William Flete', p. 79).

mother who chastises her children (p. 235; this will be discussed in more detail below). There are numerous references to Christ's passion, but these are not in the affective style of the Middle English translation, where they are expanded and adapted in the style of late fourteenth-century affective devotion.

Consolacio alters the original text for a female reader, who is probably a solitary given the lengthy addition in Chapter 7 concerning solitaires, and the importance of perseverance in meditation and contemplation (precisely, in fact, the kind of material provided by *Festis*). Yet the adaptations which suggest the gendered nature of the audience are superficial, generally confined to the frequent address to a 'dear sister' and the occasional addition of 'or woman' to references to the general 'man' who is the subject of the original treatise. And, while the treatise offers its reader a great deal of advice, usually couched in lists of dangers and remedies, role models remain few.

The role models that are added are, again, mostly male, but are broadened to include more popular biblical figures and some references to lay persons.¹⁸ From the Bible we find David, Peter, and Mary Magdalene, found in a list in Chapter 3. They are presented as models for the reader who has fallen into temptation and consented to sin. She is advised, 'beth sory, and crieth god mercy þerof, and beth not discomforted þerfore' (p. 223). If she remembers how God forgave David, Peter, and 'Maudeleyn' for their great sins, she will remember God's great mercy, and that he has forgiven not only them, but all who are contrite and ask for his mercy. Even if she cannot feel sorrow and contrition, she should remember that God takes heed of man's will, not his 'travelous fantasyes' (the misleading or deceitful thoughts brought on by tribulation).

Many of the added role models appear in Chapter 4, which is particularly concerned with the despair that tribulation can cause. Here, the city of Nineveh and King Hezekiah appear as models of those who forsake their sins and turn to God with contrition. The reader is told that even when God has passed sentence upon a man, God's mercy will be offered to those who repent; his mercy is so great 'þat he chaungeth his sentensis fro scharpe vengeance in to forzeuennesse, and of þe peynes zeueth alegeaunces' (p. 226).

¹⁸ For details of the additions, see Hackett, Colledge, and Chadwick, 'William Flete's *De remediis contra temptationes*', pp. 213–18. There is one extended *narracio* of a squire, John Homeleis, who dined with an angel, that is presented as a medieval form of urban legend, as the author asserts that he knew a person who was in the English abbey where the squire was buried and read 'up on hym the words afor seyd' (p. 237). It is not clear whether these words were the words on the squire's tombstone, or the words of the narrative.

A particularly interesting model is the anonymous man who doubted and asked Christ who could be saved. The reader is reminded of Christ's answer:

Beleve, seyd oure lord Jesu, þat god þe fader is al myghtyful, as who seyth, þer is no þing impossible to god, but alle is possible to hym þat alle synnes may for 3eue.
(p. 227)

This story has been subtly altered from the biblical text, where it is the disciples who wonder and ask who can be saved. Changing the disciples who wonder to the singular anonymous man who doubts makes the model more accessible to the individual reader who might doubt her own salvation. Especially intriguing is the fact that the man is presented as a model for the reader who feels 'ony dredis be ymagynacion or temptacion, or for words þat 3e haue herde or haue rede in bokes, be þe whiche 3e dowte of sauacion' (p. 227). The author seems to be aware of the harshness of much guidance literature, and, although he does not say so, he may be referring to guidance writing that focuses on female sinfulness. Yet, if he is aware of such gendered critiques, he is only aware of them on a superficial level for his model is male. Indeed, at the beginning of Chapter 4 the adaptor has reminded his reader: 'Sister, alwey quan I speke of man in þis wrytinge, take it bothe for man and woman, for so it is ment in alle such writings, for all is mankende' (pp. 223–24). The masculine is all-inclusive; yet, as we shall see, the adaptor himself succumbs to many subtly gendered modellings of masculine as positive and feminine as negative.

The dangers of books are also evident in the brief secular exemplum of the wrestler who is now up and now down, just as the reader may be in her struggle against sin. The reader is reminded again of God's great mercy, and instructed:

and þou3 sometime 3e heren speke or reede in bokes sharpe words and harde sentencys, comforteth 3oure self, and þenke weel þat alle swich harde wordis ben seyð and wretyn to chasteise synneres, and to with drawe hem from wikkednesse, and also to purge and pure goddis specials, as is the metal in furneys, [...] And wete it weel, many wordis þat semes ful harde ben ment ful tenderly in good vndirstondyng; and þou3 some words ben ment harde as þe playn text spekyth, 3e shul not taken hem to 3ou ward, but þenketh in comfote of 3oure self þat alle harde sentens moun ben fulfilld in the Jewis and Sarasyns. (p. 225)

Here, the adaptor sounds very much like the author of *Ancrene Wisse*, who tells his 'dear sisters' that the harsh words he writes are not meant for them but for other, anonymous and sinful anchoresses.¹⁹ In *Consolacio*, the biblical Jews are

¹⁹ In 'Anchoritic Elements' I argue that *Festis* is influenced by anchoritic thought, if not

conflated with the contemporary Saracens as models of those who will perish, who will not be saved because they do not have the strength of baptism or the precious ointment of Christ's passion that heals and gives life to the soul.

This reference to Christ's passion leads directly to an extended metaphor where Moses is presented as a type of Christ: as Moses went before Israel and parted the Red Sea, so too Christ goes before the Christian in his passion, which ensures that the Christian will not perish. By his passion, Christ smites away the perils of tribulation and temptation; to the Christian armed with Christ's passion, fiends will become as flies and gnats, for Christ is their shield and strength (pp. 225–27). Indeed, references to Christ's passion are expanded and peppered throughout the text.

In the tenth and final chapter, the reader is referred once more to Peter, who asked Christ what reward he would have for forsaking all things to follow him. In the Bible, this question follows directly on Christ's response to the question of who shall be saved. Here, however, it is separated from the story of the man who doubted, and cast in the form of an introduction to the final chapter of the treatise, addressed particularly to the 'children of holy church' who have forsaken the world for the health of their souls and to please God, whom they have chosen to love and serve (p. 237). Christ tells Peter that he will sit with him in judgement over the twelve tribes of Israel on the Judgement Day. Furthermore, the adaptor reminds his reader that:

oure lord seyde also to hym þat all, not only on or too or somme, but he seyde þat alle þo þat forsaken for his loue kyn or frendes or possessions, þat is to sayn hous or lond or any other worldly good, þei shuln hauen here in þis lyf an hundirt fold mede and blisse with outen ende. (p. 237)

The 'hundirt fold mede' (hundred-fold reward) that is normally reserved for heaven is here, in Christ's words to Peter, granted in this earthly life. Peter becomes the model for the reader who has abandoned the world for Christ, who can, with this reassurance, cast away doubt and fear. The chapter continues with an extended meditation on Christ's passion, which is dominated by metaphors of battle as Christ's deeds are the reader's shield, spear and strength. Finally, Christ himself becomes the model and spouse of the soul, who is filled with sweetness and devotion through meek prayer, meditation and confession.

The author/adaptor of *Consolacio* rarely relies on role models to encourage his reader in her trials and temptations; but what few models he does provide

directly by *Ancrene Wisse* itself. It appears that *Consolacio* is also influenced by anchoritic writing, and is well aware of both its richness, and its dangers.

are overwhelmingly biblical and male. He makes a determined effort to soften or even dismiss other writings that deal harshly with the troubled soul, suggesting that he is well aware of the other guidance literature (much of it directed towards women, although he does not say so) that does not focus on the comfort of the soul, the *consolacio anima* with which he is concerned. And, although he adapts his text specifically for a female reader, the adaptations that rely on gender are superficial; the *Consolacio* retains the overt assumption of its original, that the masculine is all-encompassing and that the male world is universal.

Unlike *Consolacio*, *Festis* relies on extensive role modelling to encourage and nurture its reader. The models are mainly biblical; the meditative format of the *Festis* relies on affective identification between the reader and the figures in Christ's narrative, and especially with Christ himself. Thus, there are no secular *exempla* and no secular characters are introduced, although secular activities are (infrequently) used as metaphors for spiritual goals; for example, the cleaning of a house (a markedly female activity) is a metaphor for the cleansing of the soul through confession, contrition, and virtue:

Ferthermore sustir <sih> as a man may se that it is not faire ne semli for a gret lord to comyn in to a foul hows, but first the hous muste be swepid and mad fair & clene and honestli arraied. Rith so it is not fair ne semli for oure lord god to comyn in to oure soule, ne we to make us homly with him with famulier speche & louing daliaunce. yef ony spot of sinne be with inne us wilfulli, til the hous of oure conscience be clene swepid be confession and maad fair be contricion, and the soule honestli arraied wit meknesse, and alle other gostli uertues, or ellis to stonde in good wil and desir to have alle gode vertues, and seke & preie therfore. And be the endeles mercy of oure lord god, that good wil schal been acceptid as for dede, yef a man seke besili ther afir. (pp. 4–5)

The use of role models, therefore, differs from those presented to the readers in Carlson's and Morley's examples in this volume. While the contemporary readers in the previous two essays are encouraged to look backward — for *The Life of Rade Gund* to the eponymous early medieval queen, and for the *Mirroure of Golde for the Synfull Soule* to biblical and patristic sources as well as contemporary Tudor examples of female piety — *Festis* encourages its intended audience of enclosed religious women to identify primarily with biblical women. Nevertheless, the mentoring relationship between the female author and reader suggests that the former can also act as a model for the latter — although the text sees both women as ultimately emulating the role models found in the Gospels.

Not only are there considerably more biblical models presented for the reader in *Festis*, the way in which role models are used is substantially different from *Consolacio*. Most notably, in *Festis*, positive male models are nor-

manly applied to the church in general, rather than to the individual soul. For example, at Christ's nativity, the shepherds are models for the shepherds of Holy Church who must govern their own souls (prayer #7, pp. 14–15), and the three kings are models first of all Christian kings, then of 'our king', and lastly of Christ as king over the Christian's body, soul, and heart (prayer #9, pp. 16–18).²⁰ Similarly, the apostles whom Christ defends from the Pharisees' reproof model the servants of Holy Church who are scorned by their enemies (prayer #28, pp. 47–48).²¹ Only occasionally are the apostles cited as models for the individual soul. For example, the calling of the apostles is a model for Christ's calling and naming the Christian soul and, in particular, the soul of both author and reader (prayer #23, pp. 33–35), and the apostles' reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost models the individual soul's access to the wit and wisdom to govern the self, and the strength to suffer pain and withstand vice (prayer #52, pp. 84–85). The merged voice of author/reader is constructed in the first person plural, emphasizing that the members of their community are to be included in this prayer:

O, blisful lord ful of swetnesse and ful of all bounte, sende us youre holi gost to fulfille us with wit and wisdom. Where thorw we mowe wisli gouerne oure self, as longe as the lif is withinne oure bodies. And also to yeuen vs strengthe mekeli and myghtili to suffren peynes and disseses for youre loue, and to with stonde alle vices, and neuir to flitte from yow for lif ne for deth. (p. 85)

Often, however, biblical men are negative models, exemplifying traits which the individual soul should strive to avoid. Hezekiah, who in *Consolacio* is a positive model of contrition, is presented in *Festis* as an example of those who neglect to praise and thank God (p. 90). In the story of Christ calming the sea, Peter is an example of the fear that can overcome the soul threatened by the water of tribulation (prayer #27, pp. 45–46). The Pharisees in the story of the Woman Taken in Adultery are models of those who hate and despise Holy Church (prayer #29, pp. 48–50, discussed in detail below). Other negative role models include the Pharisee who scorned the lowly publican and Lucifer, both examples of overweening pride (pp. 95–96).

²⁰ The prayer for the king (pp. 17–18) is unusually long, suggesting that the author is a dedicated royalist, not unsurprising for the leader of a house like Syon, which was a royal foundation whose early abbesses were appointed by the king. It also suggests a concern that would be shared by a woman such as Lady Margaret Beaufort, whose concerns with her son's royal status is discussed by Morley.

²¹ It is, perhaps, significant that the 'excusing' of the apostles occurs after the more developed discussion of the excusing of Mary Magdalene in prayer 25, discussed below.

The only biblical male that the individual soul is expected to emulate is Christ himself. The affective nature of the meditation on Christ's life that dominates *Festis* highlights *imitatio Christi* as the primary goal of the enclosed life. The Wedding in Cana introduces a series of prayers that focus on Christ's modelling of the solitary lifestyle, dominated by images of water and transformation (prayers #17–21, pp. 24–30). The story of the Wedding in Cana focuses on nurture and transformation. The reader prays that she may be transformed by Christ, just as the water was transformed into wine, in words that associate the transformation of the soul with the incarnation, and the nurturing of Christ in Mary's womb and at her breast:

O, goode lord for that lady loue betwene whos preciouise sides fourty wikes ye lay,
and aftir youre birthe ful tendirli kept yow and nurschede yow, and fedde yow, with
swete mylke: graunte me continually youre grace & turne my vices in to uertues.
(prayer #17, p. 25)

The Wedding is immediately followed by Christ's baptism, modelling the cleansing of the reader's soul (prayer #18, p. 26). The juxtaposition of these prayers firmly cements the sacramental overtones of transforming water into wine.

The following three prayers commemorate Christ's solitude in the wilderness, his poverty, and his holy living. Christ's solitude, fasting, and temptation in the wilderness engender his compassion for those who choose the solitary life for his love (prayer #19, pp. 26–27). This prayer reinforces the solitary nature of the life that the author and reader have chosen:

O. goode lord haue pite & compassion on hem alle that wilfulli for youre loue beith
solitarie, Ancres, Reclusis, and hermits, and alle estatiss reclusid. Fulfille hem wit
perfith grace that thei may leuen uertuousli, and yeue hem myht and strengthe to
wistonde alle temptacions of þe flesch, of þe world, and of þe feend. (p. 27)

Christ's earthly sufferings, including vigils, hunger, thirst, 'hard living' and 'bare foot goings', are models for the reader's penance, lived out in a lifestyle of prayer, contrition, and good deeds grounded in Christ (prayer #20, pp. 27–30). Christ's holy living models the reader's own, making her union with Christ possible (prayer #21, pp. 30–31). Once again, that union is expressed in images of water and wine:

yeve me grace glorious god so deepli to wade uertuousli in youre swete loue, þat ye
be continually in myn þow3th, and I ther wit evere to be glad with outyn dissolu-
cion, and sobre wit oute heuynesse. (pp. 30–31)

The prayers that model the solitary life are thus framed in images of water and wine, which represent sacramental transformation, cleansing, and union with

Christ. The prayers are also linked in their representation of union through nurturing liquids: water, wine, and the milk of the Virgin's breast. These themes are taken up in Christ's interactions with biblical women, as we shall see in the next section of the essay.

The differences in the ways that biblical male models are used in *Consolacio* and *Festis* is especially clear in the representations of Peter in the two texts. In *Consolacio* Peter is, interestingly, a model for the solitary life. That solitaries are an important part of the intended audience is suggested by a lengthy addition to the Latin text concerning the special temptations of solitaries and contemplatives, where the author stresses the importance of keeping holy company (pp. 232–33). Later, as we have seen, in his final, most affective, chapter, the author addresses those who have forsaken the world and uses Peter as their model. Peter's reward ensures the reader's reward, and the author urges his reader to cast away all false doubts that would keep her from love and hope in God.

Peter also appears in *Consolacio* as a model of contemplative devotion in a passage found in both the original Latin and ME III, which compares the transfiguration, the denial, and Pentecost. At the transfiguration, Peter's desire to remain on the mountain is an example of how easy it is to have devotion when one is in union with Christ. Peter's denial, however — prompted by fear of a 'woman's word' — shows that when one is tormented by tribulation, faithful devotion is more difficult. Nevertheless, the author reminds his reader, at Pentecost Peter was confirmed by the Holy Ghost, and nothing on earth could make him afraid. He concludes that his reader must suffer tribulation patiently and wait for the strength of the Holy Ghost, even if she cannot feel the sweetness and comfort of union with God (pp. 230–31).

It is telling that Peter, the implicit but powerful symbol of the institutional church, is used in *Consolacio* as a model of the individual soul. This combination not only integrates the individual into the community, but it does so by reminding the reader of the Church's ministers who, themselves sacramentally endowed with the Holy Spirit, mediate between the Christian soul and God by administering the sacraments that join that soul both to the community and to Christ. It is also, perhaps, significant that Peter, who would become the head of the Church and thus a symbol of the institutionalization of Christianity, is here prompted by the fear of women's dangerous words that typifies the medieval church. Indeed, tribulation itself is represented in the Denial by a woman which, as we shall see, is typical of the author's attitude towards the dangers that woman represents. This danger is only to be overcome by faithful endurance, with the help of the Holy Ghost.

The author of *Festis* takes quite a different view of Peter, as is evident from the story of Christ calming the sea noted above, where Peter represents fear. We cannot know what her reading of Peter's denial might have been, as that would have been in the lost section of the text. The transfiguration and Pentecost, however, are in the extant portion and receive considerably more attention than they do in *Consolacio*. The transfiguration focuses on Peter as a negative model for the soul (prayer #31, pp. 55–57). Here, Peter's desire to remain on the mountain is seen as an attempt to avoid tribulation, not as an expression of devotion. Peter's wish to remain is explicitly contrasted with Christ's refusal to do so. Instead, Christ chose to come down from the mountain and suffer pain and death for our redemption. And, although the reader prays that Christ will transform her soul out of worldly joy into the mirth of union with Christ, the road to that union is through Christ's passion. Indeed, the prayer that follows begins the passion section of the text with the raising of Lazarus.

Peter is not even mentioned in the Pentecost prayer (prayer #52, pp. 84–85), where the apostles are general models of those who receive wit and wisdom from Christ, and who suffer patiently and steadfastly, never leaving Christ's side in life or death. This passage echoes (almost verbatim) a previous prayer that asks for wit and wisdom for all those who preach and teach Christ's words (prayer #15, p. 23, Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve):

O, goode lord ful of grace, I preie yow with my pore herte that ye yeue hem alle grace of wit and wisdom that prechin & techin youre word, and fulfille hem so with the goodnes of youre holi gost that here wordes mowen uertuousli entren in to the soules that herieth it where thorw thei mowen hate synne & eschewe it, and yeve hem to good lif. (p. 23)

If there was ever any doubt in the reader's mind that the author includes herself (and her reader) in this category, it is banished by the strong language of the later prayer, couched in the first-person singular, and recalling the language of previous prayers referring to the tribulations, burdens and responsibilities of the solitary life:

O, blisful lord ful of swetnesse and ful of all bounte, sende us youre holi gost to fulfille us with wit and wisdom. Where thorw we mowe wisli gouerne oure self, as longe as the lif is withinne oure bodies. (p. 85)

The ways in which these two texts use male models illustrates the authors' views of the patriarchal world of the fifteenth-century church. *Consolacio*, like Flete's original Latin treatise, presents the reader with relatively few role models, but of those that are included, the biblical role models are overwhelmingly male,

and the *exempla* are exclusively so. The additions to the original Latin text focus on the individual soul's relationship with Christ, the beloved spouse. Therefore, they include biblical figures beloved of God, sinners whose contrition and confession earns forgiveness, and reminders of Christ's protection and love. Yet, in spite of being altered for a female reader, *Consolacio* retains and reinforces the masculine authority of the original by adding further male models. Indeed, as we have seen, the adaptor retains the attitude that the masculine is universal. *Consolacio* thus uses the male world to represent universal models for individual Christian behaviour: contrition, confession, forgiveness, hope, faith, and love.

Unlike the adaptor of *Consolacio*, the author of *Festis* addresses her female audience more aptly in the roles of biblical men. Those who have legitimate authority over her are represented by positive male models which represent the male clerics of Holy Church rather than individuals within it. These models tend to be symbolic groups rather than individuals (the shepherds, the apostles) and almost without exception the text refers to them as 'servants' rather than authorities. Their function is clearly to serve the reader in her spiritual life, not to rule over it. Individual biblical men are generally models of negative human conduct towards Christ. Individual men, it seems, represent the dangers to the individual soul. The only true model for the soul is Christ himself, who models the solitary life whose *imitatio Christi* leads the soul to union with him. Yet, the reader requires more, for she must learn to interact directly with Christ. Thus, the negative male models are rejected in favour of biblical women who interact positively with Christ and who present the reader with positive models with whom to identify.

Female Models in Consolacio anime and The Festis and the Passion of Oure Lord Ihesu Crist

In the use of female models we find an even greater divergence between the two texts. Women figure rarely in *Consolacio*. There is a very brief reference to the Virgin Mary as having suffered 'disease' with Christ on earth, and the even briefer reference to Mary Magdalene in a list that includes Peter and David, mentioned above, where she is simply referred to as *Maudeleyn*. In spite of being adapted for a female audience, the only feminine models that are developed in any way are the story of the Woman Taken in Adultery (discussed in detail below) and the metaphor of God as a chastising mother (which quickly turns into a metaphor of God as a comforting father).

The metaphor of God as a mother is borrowed either directly from *Ancrene Wisse* or, more likely, from the *Stimulus amoris* which was influenced by *Ancrene*

Wisse and itself influenced the *Consolacio* heavily. The metaphor has evolved, although the main message is the same: God behaves like a loving mother who chastises her children for their own good. However, the context of the metaphor changes radically here, as it is applied not to the reader's direct struggle with the fiend or her communion with (or isolation from) God, but rather to her interaction with others:

if ony creature, man or woman, seie to 3ou ony bytynge word or words of discomfort, taketh it mekely and paciently, and þenketh þat paraurenture it is don þoru3 temptacion of the fend to distroblen 3ou and lette 3ou, or it is a chastysyng of god for som word or for dede þat 3e haue don or seyde. For oure lord god dooth lyke a lovyng modir; a louyng modir þat is wys and well tau3t sche wol þat here children be vertuose and well norishid, and if sche may knowe ony of hem with a defauzte, sche wole 3iue hem a knocke on the heed, and if thei don a gret defaute, sche wol 3eue hem a buffet vnder the cheke, and if thei haue don a grettere trespass, sche wol bylasche hem scharpely. (p. 235)

Oddly, here the temptation of the fiend and God's chastising are well-nigh indistinguishable. God's love, it seems, is enacted directly, through chastising the erring soul, or indirectly, by allowing the fiend to do so. As well, it seems that God's chastising is not particularly defined as the actions of a loving mother; immediately following this passage the text continues: 'Þus doth god, þat is oure louyng fadir þat al virtue and goodnesse cometh fro' (p. 235). God wishes his chosen children to be virtuous and well-taught in the soul, and so he will knock them on the head with words that are unpleasant and uncomfortable; he will give them a sharp slap in various ways, according to various offences; and he will chastise great trespasses with great duress. Even if it is difficult to take joy from such loving chastising, the reader is urged to think of God's goodness and the painful passion that Christ suffered, and to remember that God never sends chastising without comfort.

This, the only modelling that is specifically gendered as feminine (God is our mother), shows the slippage that characterizes the whole text, as the Mother-God who chastises immediately and easily becomes the Father-God, who both chastises and comforts. The description of the Father-God's blows is worded identically to the description of the Mother-God's chastisement; but it is the Father-God whose goodness and love allow for the son's passion, which will save the world. Once again, the masculine is normative: so much so that the mother and the father are interchangeable and the one slips into the other without the author's awareness.

In contrast, the *Festis* author's careful selection of stories from the Bible shows a distinct emphasis on biblical women. Surprisingly, *all* of the female

models are positive, in spite of the fact that, with the exception of the Virgin Mary, all of the biblical women included in the prayer cycle are sinners, or marginalized in some way.²² Nevertheless, all are models of the soul, alienated through sin, yet called and welcomed by Christ when she approaches him in faith and love.

In *Festis* the solitary life and contemplative union with Christ are modelled by the strong biblical women presented in the text. Transformation, insight, and eucharistic imagery in the stories of the Samaritan woman and the Canaanite woman model the movement of the sinful soul to the soul fed and filled by Christ. The imagery of nurture is reinforced by the physical union of Christ with the Virgin in her womb, and the theme of transformation is expanded in the spiritual union with Christ in the heart depicted by the conflated figures of Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany. But what these biblical women do *not* model is as important as what they do: the total absence of reference to either the sin or the purity of the female body significantly undermines the emphasis on sexual sin found in most thirteenth- and fourteenth-century devotional writings for women. Instead, the author focuses on the soul's capacity for loving union with Christ. This contrasts with the use of female models in Morley's essay in this volume, where Lady Margaret Beaufort's translation of the *Mirroure of Golde for the Synfull Soule* retains its antifeminist rhetoric of the female body. Morley argues that in this case it allows the reader to identify with the sinful body of the mother to the king. In *Festis* the sinful female body is absent, replaced by an idealized feminine soul.

The Virgin Mary plays a significant role in the early life of Christ and at his resurrection in this text. She plays a number of roles for the reader: intercessor, cloistered woman, and mother to Christ. On the one hand, the Virgin's joys are generally presented as occasions for prayers for her intercession on behalf of the individual soul. For example, for her joy in the Annunciation, the reader prays that she will intercede with the Trinity for forgiveness of the reader's sins and the gift to love all that Christ loves and hate all that he hates (prayer #2, p. 10). In prayer #14, commemorating all of the Virgin's joys in Christ, the reader seeks the Virgin's intercession to make her a good woman and grant her the grace to be always more praiseworthy in the sight of Christ than in the sight of people (p. 18). On the other hand, the Virgin's grief is more often an occasion for intercession on behalf of groups of individuals; for example, her sorrow at having lost her son for three days in Jerusalem (prayer #15, p. 23, Jesus teaching in

²² See the introduction to the partial edition in *Women's Writing*, ed. by Barratt, pp. 205–18.

the temple at the age of twelve) gives her compassion to intercede on behalf of all those who suffer pain, tribulation, and temptation (prayer #16, pp. 23–24).

The Virgin is also a model of loving communion with Christ. One of her joys at his resurrection is her ‘dalliance’ with him, her heart inflamed with his love:

O, Lady for that gret ioye that ye hadde whan ye saw youre dereworthi sone from deth to liue arisen. And for the goodli daliaunce that was thanne between you bothe.

O, gloriouse uirgine and for the feruent loue that youre blissid herte was with inflaumid in his blisful presence: preie my lord the Trinite that in alle vertues, and rihtful leuyng he yeue me grace to haue good perseueraunce into myn lyues ende. (prayer #47, pp. 79–80)

The language here recalls the ‘familiar speech and loving dalliance’ that the author states as the purpose of her meditations in the prologue (p. 4, quoted above, p. 248). In fact, it is in the union with Christ suggested by such ‘dalliance’ that the Virgin provides the most important modelling of the lifestyle of devotion to which author and reader aspire, as we shall see.

Images of pregnancy, nurture, and enclosure are the dominant means by which the indwelling of Christ in the individual human soul is presented, again using biblical women as models for the female reader.²³ Indeed, the image of the virginal body is striking by its absence in this text, and there is a total lack of reference to sexual sin. For example, the prayer for the cleansing transformation of the reader’s heart and soul (not, note, her body) is modelled not on the Virgin’s purity, but on Christ’s incarnation in her womb through divine grace. Recalling Christ’s turning water into wine at the Wedding in Cana, the reader notes that he did so at the behest of his mother, and prays that he will similarly turn her vices to virtues, and fasten her heart to him (prayer #17, p. 25, quoted above, p. 250). Similarly, in the prayer on the incarnation, the stirring of Christ in Mary’s womb is the prompt for a prayer for the transformation of the soul:

A ladi for the greite ioyze that ye hadde at al times whanne ye swete mayde felt hym stere in yowre precious wombe, knowing wel that he was verray godes sone.

Preie to my lord the trinite that he make myn soule and herte clene, that I myhte fele him stere in me be hys deuine grace. (prayer #3, p. 11)

The reader recalls the Virgin’s joy in feeling Christ stir in her womb and prays that she, too, might feel him stir in her through grace. Finally, recalling Christ’s

²³ I argue in ‘Anchoritic Elements’ that the imagery of enclosure draws heavily upon the imagery of anchoritism, and, in particular, *Ancrene Wisse*, which makes the absence of any reference to sexual purity even more startling.

burial, the reader prays to those who were present, including the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and Christ himself:

I prey yow alle preiyeth for me to that holi god Ihesu þat he take myn herte from al ertheli thing, and berie & close it spiritali in him, as his blissid body was beried in the sepulcre. (prayer #46, pp. 78–79)

It is, I think, highly significant that the Virgin drops out of the prayers entirely between the two references to the enclosure of the reader's heart with Christ at the Wedding in Cana and the burial. This means that the Virgin is present primarily in the prayers that commemorate Christ's private life: his incarnation, nativity, and youth. The Virgin's only other appearances are at the burial, which ends his earthly presence, and at the resurrection, which inaugurates his heavenly rule and ongoing spiritual presence. Even the Wedding in Cana, which begins Christ's public ministry in the Gospel of John, is treated here as a private event, the transition from his family life to his baptism and solitude in the wilderness, which prepare him for his public ministry.

It is perhaps because the Virgin is, inevitably, impossible to emulate fully, that as Christ moves into his public ministry the Virgin Mary's role as a model of the soul's relationship with Christ is replaced by other biblical women. The Virgin enables Christ's incarnation and thus his mission of salvation; but she is not the one(s) whom Christ came to save. Appropriately, then, the women who dominate this section are, unlike the Virgin, fully human: sinners and outcasts who overcome the gulf between themselves and Christ through love and devotion, just as the reader, a sinful human soul, uses prayer and meditation to welcome Christ into her heart. Each woman models a distinct aspect of the reader's devotional and intellectual life. Yet we also see a continuation of the combination of sacramental and nurturing imagery in these prayers commemorating Christ's public ministry, which are framed by the story of the Samaritan woman and the water of life (prayer #22, pp. 31–33), and the story of the Canaanite woman and the bread of life (prayer #30, pp. 52–55).

The Samaritan woman (prayer #22, pp. 31–33) is a model of those who are enlightened by Christ and united with him, drawing on the symbolism of water as an image of ecstatic union found in the prayers commemorating Christ's baptism and the turning of water into wine. Christ's interaction with her is described as 'fulhomli' (fully familiar or intimate, p. 32), as is the indwelling of Christ in the soul of the reader in the prologue (p. 4). The water of life is allied with Christ's knowledge of the woman's 'privy secrets' (p. 32), as the darkness of sin and the soul's thirst are replaced by the light of clear sight, true understanding and sure knowledge.

O, goode lord come in to my soule; tel and schew me the derkhed defaute þat priueli lurkyn with inne me. Suffre me not to make of uertu vice, ne of vice uertu. Voide fro me alle euil custumes and yeue me cler syht of trewe vndirstonding and sothfast knowinge, so þat I may fully amende me of alle myne defautes.

A gracious Ihesu graunte me also þe watir of lif þat I thurste not endelesli, and make me drunke in youre swete loue wher thorw I may at þe laste come to everlesting lif. (pp. 32–33)

The water of life not only quenches spiritual thirst, but makes the reader drunk in Christ's sweet love, recalling the transformation of water into wine at the Wedding in Cana. This prayer thus exploits the imagery of water and transformation that dominates the previous five prayers and, with the Wedding in Cana, frames Christ's modelling of the solitary life with images of transformation and spiritual union through sacrament, prayer, meditation, understanding, and knowledge.

The sacramental and, in particular, eucharistic symbolism is reinforced by the reference to the bread of life in the story of the Canaanite woman that closes Christ's public ministry (prayer #30, pp. 52–55), showing how carefully the text has been constructed. But this is not the first appearance of the Canaanite woman in the text; she is, in fact, the first model presented to the reader. In the general confession which precedes the prayers, she is an example of the greatness of Christ's mercy as he grants her prayer in spite of her sinfulness, just as the reader prays to be cleansed from her sins in preparation for the prayers and meditations which immediately follow (p. 8). Similarly, in prayer #30, she is an example of the outcast soul who perseveres in prayer, even when Christ withdraws and seems to refuse to answer.

O lord mercyable ihesu, but first ye made daunger whan ye seide to here þat it was not leful to take the bred þat was ordeynynd to þe children, and yeuen it to þe houndes. And sche answerd. lord noo.

But houndes may ete þe crummes þat fallin doun from þe lordis bord out of children handes. [...]

O mercyful Trinite thowgh I be most unworthy, and am an hound thorw bestli condicions; & werse than an hound, as in þat þat [*sic*] I haue wrethed yow. Yet goode lord I preie yow yeue me crummes of youre mercy & grace, and the bred of euirlasting life, & make me with al feith & mekenesse continualli to abide in preiere, þat myne preieres mowyn been herd and grauntid of yow, as was the womanes of Cananee. (pp. 53–55)

Perseverance with faith in the face of one's own unworthiness and Christ's estrangement is rewarded with the bread of life, continuing the recurring

imagery of feeding and nourishment to express the soul's union with God. The bread of life also recalls the sacramental imagery which opens the section on Christ's public ministry, reminding the reader of the importance of the sacraments as well as prayer and devotion.

Both the Canaanite woman and the Samaritan woman illustrate that, with meekness and faith, unworthiness or sin is not a barrier to union with Christ; their stories form a sacramental frame to the narrative of Christ's public ministry, where the central female biblical model becomes, not surprisingly, Mary Magdalene. Mary is introduced in a series of prayers that focus on contrition, tears, tribulation, forgiveness, and love (prayers #24–26, pp. 35–45). In keeping with the text's expurgation of the sinfulness of the female body, the extent of Mary's sin is imaged not by sexual sin, but by the demons that Christ cast out from her. Significantly, she is not conflated with the Woman Taken in Adultery (as is typical of fifteenth-century exegesis), but as the sinner who repents and is received into Christ's love, she is conflated with Mary of Bethany, the model of the contemplative life.

Mary Magdalene models the love and devotion of the sinful soul who is called and healed by Christ. After Christ casts out her demons, she braves the house of the Pharisee, washing Christ's feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. Her love and grateful devotion inspires the reader's boldness to approach Christ's feet in spite of her unworthiness, and to weep for her sin until he grants her forgiveness (prayer #24, pp. 35–36). The purification of tears is privileged here as a way to approach Christ, again allowing water to transform the reader's relationship with the divine.

The long prayer that follows focuses on the transformation of those who, like Mary, forsake their sins for Christ and, like the reader, forsake the world for his love (prayer #25, pp. 36–41).²⁴ At their contrition, he makes them 'fair and bright' and makes his dwelling familiarly within them (p. 37). The indissoluble connection between contrition and indwelling is stressed as the reader recalls that Mary Magdalene was 'excused' by Christ three times: once to the Pharisee, when she wept at Christ's feet; once to Martha for choosing the better part; and once to Judas for anointing Christ's feet with precious ointment. Here, Mary's two acts of devotion and contrition at Christ's feet frame her identification with Mary of Bethany as the exemplar of the contemplative and solitary life. The reader seeks to emulate Mary's loving familiarity with Christ, identi-

²⁴ It is useful to recall that in *Consolacio* it is Peter who takes on this role, and his reward is the power of judgement.

fying herself with the contemplative and solitary life which Mary exemplifies, rather than with her sin.

The theme of contrition is continued in prayer #26, the feeding of the multitude, which introduces the metaphor of bread as spiritual nourishment found later in the story of the Canaanite woman. It is significant that, structurally, Mary's positive modelling of both contrition and the confidence that grows from her intense love and union with Christ (for which she is 'excused' to the Pharisee) is immediately followed by this story of Christ's nurture, in which images of transformation are once again embedded.

The next story, however, is that of the calming of the sea, in which Peter models the soul whose faith is insufficient and who must be saved from the water of tribulation by Christ. This is followed by the story of Christ's excusing the apostles who were accused by the Pharisees, representing the enemies of Holy Church who accuse her servants, just as Mary is excused for her acts of love and contrition. The juxtaposition of male and female models reinforces the pattern in which positive models of the soul are female, and male models are either negative or model the Church as a whole.

Following Christ's public ministry, dominated as we have seen by female companions and role models, the text turns to Christ's passion. Here, his isolation is marked by his almost total lack of companions, both female and male. Unusually, his mother and Mary Magdalene do not appear at all in the passion section of the text which survives, where the only model of devotion is Veronica, whose veil is a love token that enables the reader to keep Christ's passion and face always in her mind. The passion section is deeply personal, and the reader interacts directly with the events and the emotions that they invoke. It seems that once the reader has learned from her models, she can progress to union with Christ through direct participation in the passion, without the mediation of role models. The prayers and meditations of this section bring the reader to the foot of the cross, where she stands, alone, watching her beloved suffer and die — a more sophisticated meditation and identification than Nicholas Love would have advocated. The models of her response to Christ's love, the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, only reappear as the reader again becomes an observer, rather than a direct participant, at Christ's burial and resurrection.

The importance of positive female models is again highlighted in the series of four prayers commemorating Christ's resurrection appearances (prayers #47–50). On Sunday, the day of his resurrection, Christ appears to the Virgin Mary and to Mary Magdalene. The Virgin's great joy in her son's resurrection and the fervent love that inflames her heart reward her perseverance in sorrow, inspiring the reader to pray for the same perseverance and reward (prayer

#47, pp. 79–80). Mary Magdalene's inward love and her great joy in Christ's presence and speech models the perfect joy and love for Christ that the reader seeks in her own heart (prayer #48, p. 81). It is only on Easter Monday that Christ appears to men, who function as models for Christians in general and, in particular, those who most need the faith that characterizes the Virgin and Magdalene's modelling of the reader's communion with Christ. Unlike the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, Cleophas and his companion on the road to Emmaus do not recognize Christ at once. The contrast is heightened by the fact that the author omits the usual description of Magdalene's mistaking Christ for the gardener, referring only to her great joy at his presence and conversation. When the eyes of Cleophas and his companions are opened, they model the great comforts that Christ has given, and will give to his chosen children on Judgement Day (prayer #49, pp. 81–82). Finally, the author commemorates Christ's appearing to Thomas, when he gave his blessing to all those who believe in him but never saw him. Again, the model is for believers in general, exemplifying the blessing that comes from perfect belief (prayer #50, pp. 82–83).

Like the example of Peter, discussed above, the story of the Woman Taken in Adultery exemplifies the divergence in the treatment of biblical women as models in *Consolacio* and *Festis*. In *Consolacio* this is the only female model that is developed at any length. The story appears in an extended addition which focuses on the fact that the mercy of God is greater than his laws (pp. 225–28). The interpretation is fairly conventional: the author states that under the law of Moses, ordained by God, the woman should have been stoned, but that the wisdom of God showed the Pharisees their own sins so that they could not judge her. As in the biblical story, the focus is not on the woman, but on her sin; the story is used to show that where there is much sin, there is also much grace, and therefore no matter how sinful a man or woman is, he or she should not despair — and who, it is implied, could be more sinful than this (p. 227)? The Woman Taken in Adultery models extreme sexual sin, and most particularly, female sin. Yet, even though the law that would condemn her was handed down by God, his great mercy overrules his law.

In *Festis*, however, the woman's sin is not the point, and is only mentioned to identify her (as the anonymous 'woman who was found in adultery'). She is condemned neither by Christ nor by the merged voice of the author/reader (prayer #29, pp. 49–52). Indeed, so strong is the text's reticence to burden its readers with a sense of the sinfulness of the female body, that this most obvious model of the dangers of sexual sin is the only biblical woman who is *not* applied to the individual soul. Given the author's consistent emphasis on sin, repentance, and acceptance, this is telling. The author is clearly not interested

in simply reassuring her reader that individual sin is not a barrier to union with Christ; she is interested in using the words and actions of the biblical women that she chooses for her models to show how the sinful soul may approach Christ and be received into his love. The woman found in adultery does not approach Christ, she is brought before him. She does not speak to Christ, the Pharisees accuse her. Even her identity is dominated by passivity: she is 'the woman who *was found* in adultery', not 'the woman *who committed* adultery'. Unlike the other biblical women we have discussed, she cannot model speech or behaviour, because she does not speak or act — she is merely acted upon.

In fact, the woman is not a model at all; instead, it is the Pharisees who would condemn her who become the negative model in the story. It is the Pharisees, not the author, who refer to the law of Moses that calls for stoning; and it is not a reminder of the law, but a test for Christ, proposed out of malice.²⁵ The Pharisees represent those who attack Holy Church and her members, and it is *their* sins of blindness and pride which are foregrounded. The reader prays, not for strength to withstand the attacks of her enemies, but that Christ will write in the ground of their hearts and open the eyes of their souls to see their own sins and feel shame for their pride. The reader identifies with no one in the story, but responds by praying for her enemies, with true Christ-like love.

The comparison between *Consolacio* and *Festis* shows how both authorial expectations and genre can affect gender modelling. In spite of *Consolacio*'s inclusion of affective language and motifs, the male author's use of biblical men to the virtual exclusion of women demonstrates his unconscious lack of empathy with his female audience. The only extended treatment of a biblical woman is the Woman Taken in Adultery, who represents specifically feminine sexual sin, just as the woman who spoke to Peter in the courtyard of the high priest's house represents feminine sins of the mouth. But sin is not really the focus of the treatise; the intent of the text is to instruct on the universal remedies for temptation and tribulation. And so, the biblical men who provide models are not primarily symbols of masculine strength and resistance; they are models of repentance, contrition, and reliance upon Christ. Those who seek Christ out in contrition are granted his forgiveness and become his brides. Even Peter, the most powerful symbol of union with Christ, represents the fluctuation between devotion and despair that is necessarily part of human interaction with the divine. But, in the end, Peter represents those who are confirmed by the Holy

²⁵ If Christ had said stone her, then the Pharisees would have denounced him as cruel, so that those who were drawn to his compassion would love him the less; if he had said let her go, they would have charged him with going against the Law of Moses.

Ghost, and dwell in Christ's love. The reader is presented with a comforting and encouraging world in which the sinful soul is forgiven and loved; but it is a masculine world.

The woman who authored *Festis*, by contrast, is concerned almost exclusively with fostering her female reader's union with Christ; she is specifically *not* concerned with reminding her reader of the sin that may form a barrier to that union. Her audience is the solitary soul, and although she includes anchoresses, recluses, hermits, and 'alle estatis reclusid' (presumably including enclosed orders such as Syon) in her prayers, she explicitly addresses an individual woman. Thus, she uses individual biblical women to model her reader's relationship with Christ. By focussing on the transformative power of sacramental feminine nurturing, she transforms the traditionally negative view of women. She removes all reference to the sinful female body, replacing it with the loving female soul. Through the positive identification with biblical female models, women's state of sinfulness is changed into a state of redemptive transformation.

Conclusion

Holkham Miscellany 41 suggests that we need to re-examine the way in which the male-authored texts that are its sources might have been read by the women to whom they were addressed. The manuscript is clearly designed for a female reader, yet the texts that it contains are radically different in their gendered outlook. The manuscript opens with a text that provides strong female models of individual devotion, downplaying the conventional emphasis on the sinfulness of women. Through the re-visioning of the female body and the presentation of positive female models, the author creates a bond with her reader, weaving the voices of biblical women together with the voices of author and reader as women with shared experiences, shared weaknesses, shared needs, shared strengths, and shared devotions. The text creates a sense of community in reclusion and offers a unique glimpse into how women religious in the fifteenth century perceived themselves and each other.

Consolacio, by contrast, offers few models of devotion, and when it does, they are largely male. Yet, *Consolacio* does not share the virulent mistrust of the feminine reflected in conventional guidance literature for women. Indeed the translator/redactor seems to have little interest in gender at all, even though he adapts the text for a specifically female audience. As indicated in its title, the text is concerned with consolation, comfort, and forgiveness. However, the redactor's lack of interest in gender itself leads to a conventional presentation

of models such as Peter and the Woman Taken in Adultery, reinforcing the association of the masculine and positive modelling, of the feminine and sin.

How would the female reader for whom the manuscript was copied read this contrast of gendered models? It is too easy to assume that the positive modelling in *Festis* would be undermined by the conventional associations of women and sin in *Consolacio*, no doubt already internalized by the female reader. In fact, I would argue that the opposite would be more likely. It is important to remember that the reader is intended to *begin* with the prayers and meditations of *Festis*, which encourage contemplative union with Christ not only through the reading of the text, but also through moving beyond it to individual contemplation. *Festis* is intended to model the strength of devotion, when Christ's love is present in the soul. *Consolacio*, on the other hand, is intended to lift the soul out of despair, when the reader's sense of her own sin raises a barrier between her and Christ. Addressed to a female reader, *Consolacio* acknowledges female (and male) sin, only to show that God's love and mercy are stronger than any human sin. Indeed, the reader's sense of sin is attributed to the machinations of the devil, who seeks to distract the solitary from her prayers, thus making her feel as if she is separated from Christ, even when she is not. Indeed, the author assures his reader that a good will is accepted by God as if it were the deed.²⁶ *Consolacio* continually urges its reader to fight against the temptation to over-emphasize her own sin, and the primary remedy for that temptation is prayer and meditation on Christ's passion — precisely the kind of prayer illustrated in *Festis*, which precedes it. The entire purpose of *Consolacio* is thus to bring the reader back to a state in which she can return with confidence to the prayers of *Festis*, bringing her, spiritually, full circle.

The manuscript thus creates a coherent cycle of meditation, beginning with prayer, and moving to tribulation and consolation through prayer, turning the reader back to its beginning and bringing her always back from doubt to prayerful communion with Christ. Considered in this way, the lyric that follows *Festis* forms an appropriate bridge between the two texts:

Syke and sorwe deeply.
 Wepe and moorne sadly.
 Preye and thinke deuoutly.
 Loue and longe continually. (p. 98)

²⁶ The position is found in both the original Latin and in the Middle English, where it is, in fact, reiterated three times (pp. 230, 238 and 239). This view is, strikingly, repeated almost verbatim in *Festis*, whose author stresses that what is important is the will and desire for virtue, which will be accepted as if it were the deed (p. 5, quoted above, p. 248).

If the reader loses the sweet feeling of Christ's indwelling through sin, she should recognize her sinfulness, repent and do penance, and *move on* to the devotion that will unite her with Christ. If she is overwhelmed by tribulation, she should seek the consolation that will return her to confident contemplation. *Festis* models the prayerful state in which the reader is expected to begin, and *Consolacio* models the comfort that will banish doubt and return her to it.

The structure of Holkham Misc. 41 suggests a careful selection of texts directed at confirming and encouraging a solitary woman's devotion. The manuscript is carefully structured to lead its readers through a program of prayer, meditation, consolation, and devotion, and back again to prayer and contemplation. The fact that *Consolacio* reflects conventional attitudes towards gender, almost as if by habit, only strengthens the impact of the positive gender models in *Festis*. Indeed, by placing *Festis* before *Consolacio*, putting the more nuanced, challenging, open-ended text first, the manuscript also invites the reader to challenge the conventional instructions on temptation (and feminine representations) found in the second treatise. Negative female models are products of despair; but the positive biblical women who model devotion in *Festis* are models of the strength of a woman's soul when she is united to her divine spouse through prayer and contemplation. Such a book would be empowering indeed.

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AFTERWORD

ADAPTATION, NEGOTIATION, AND TRANSFORMATION

C. Annette Gris 

The challenge of summarizing the rich and varied essays included in *Readers, Reading, and Reception in Late Medieval English Devotional Literature* derives from the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of its subject.¹ Scholarship on medieval devotional readers and reading practices has expanded at a remarkably rapid pace over the past few decades, resulting in a body of work that is nothing less than astonishing in its breadth and depth, and in how it has transformed our understanding of medieval devotional literature in general. But this body of work would not exist were it not for the enduring collaboration among scholars and their commitment to the vast ‘jigsaw puzzle’ known broadly as the field of medieval readers and reading practices.² Perhaps more than any other field of study, the history of vernacular devotional reading was born from a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of various disciplines and approaches, and a tenacious commitment to foster courteous dialogue even where scholarly interests diverge. This volume showcases some of the best current work on devotional readers and reading for our period, building upon the excellent research of earlier scholars of religion, history, and literature, such as A. I. Doyle, H. S. Bennett, Jeremy Griffiths, Derek Pearsall, M. B.

¹ My thanks to Susan Uselmann for reading earlier drafts of this essay and providing insightful feedback.

² Doyle, ‘Retrospect and Prospect’, pp. 146.

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Parkes, Eamon Duffy, Anne Hudson, and Margaret Aston.³ The chapters examine a variety of topics, such as the technologies of manuscript and print, issues of authorship and authority, delineation of reading communities, connections between gender and textual production, and the fashioning of personal piety and devotional practice, all of which contribute to produce new ideas about how late medieval authors and readers used their books to express their theology and piety.

The trajectory of this volume of essays is a measure of how far such research has come since scholars such as Doyle, Griffiths, and Pearsall first began making inroads into understanding medieval devotional readers, and book/manuscript production and reception. The fact that the disparate subjects in this collection nevertheless form a coherent narrative — and in some cases overlap directly — is indicative of the new directions in research on readers and reading, which allows us to trace histories of traditional reading models and sketch out larger pictures of reading communities and historical trends. As Wendy Scase points out, 'it is now becoming feasible to generalize about book production, to synthesize many individual studies rather than to have to offer the specific to serve for the general'.⁴

At the same time, in stretching as far back as the eleventh century, and forward to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this volume resonates with current trends to combat periodization and generalizations about what constitutes 'monastic', 'medieval', or 'post-Reformation' devotional practices. The scholarship on late medieval spiritual practice in England has paid close attention to the complex devotional movements of the 1380s to 1420s, working to refine the understanding of the role of Wycliffites (for example, Fiona Somerset and Jill C. Havens's tireless work in this area) and Mixed Life practitioners (such as Jeremy Catto, Jonathan Hughes, and Wendy Scase) in tandem with the ecclesiastical and monastic productions of the time.⁵ In addition, the fifteenth century is now getting its due for, as Alessandra Petrina sums it up effectively, 'even if it was not a century of great original writers, it certainly seems to have

³ Doyle, *A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings in English*; Bennett, *English Books and Readers*; Griffiths and Pearsall, eds, *Book Production and Publishing*; Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*; Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*.

⁴ Scase, 'Afterword', p. 292.

⁵ Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience*; Somerset, Havens, and Pitard, eds, *Lollards and their Influence*; Catto, 'Religious change under Henry V'; Catto, 'Shaping the Mixed Life'; Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*; Scase, 'Afterword'; and Scase, *Piers Plowman' and the New Anticlericalism*.

been a century of great readers, translators and commentators'.⁶ The recent essay collection by Gillespie and Ghosh points the way for future research in fifteenth-century studies, seeking to broaden our appreciation of the period's multifaceted negotiations of beliefs and practices in its literature and history.⁷ The historical reach of our volume offers another illustration of the liveliness of research across the entire late medieval period, particularly when that research crosses disciplinary boundaries.

Perhaps most importantly, the volume showcases the centrality of vernacular and lay readers, while offering a narrative of their influence that does not seek to dethrone monastic or Latin ways of reading. Instead, the goal of this volume has been to stress continuity in change. We have seen the growth in knowledge of lay reading and spiritual practices for the entire period, as scholars have researched individuals, families, and communities who read, owned, and shared texts and devotions, making time and space for religious practices, including reading.⁸ One idea we can draw from this work is the collaborative processes involved in producing Middle English spiritual writings, where communities define themselves in part by their common reading practices and their affinity with certain Latin traditions. Wycliffites, humanists, Mixed Life practitioners, and nuns, for example, all found inspiration in the translations of Latin works and ideas, and their Latin theologians, translators and compilers saw the value in extending the reach of their Latin learning. This movement of vernacular popularization began with the Middle English mystics and Wycliffites and continued to the end of our period, when Protestants and humanists searched for ways to reintroduce biblical and classical knowledge and texts to a wider audience.

The papers in this collection examine the negotiations of readers and reading practices as medieval England's devotional tradition shifted from serving a larger monastic readership in Latin and a select group of vernacular readers in the 1100s to the wider and diverse vernacular readership of the 1400s and early 1500s, when the literate, pious laity propelled a thriving market for spiritual instruction in Middle English. Traditional models for early medieval reading — the Latin monastic tradition of *lectio divina* and the vernacular tradition of pastoral care for female religious and the laity — hold great sway at the beginning of our period, as Lenz's chapter reveals. Close rumination on the Office of St Cuthbert allowed the brothers to connect the work to scriptural references,

⁶ Petrina, *Cultural Politics*, p. 5.

⁷ Gillespie and Ghosh, eds, *After Arundel*.

⁸ See, for example, Krug, *Reading Families*; Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*; and Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*.

Bede's poetry, and other liturgical and ecclesiastical texts and melodies, making associative links through word and music to create a place for Cuthbert in the monastic context. This associative labour, creating a larger picture of meaning that integrates the current text with those that came before in order to illuminate divine truth and reform the reader's soul remains a key feature of the spiritual tradition in late medieval England. In addition, the process of adapting sources for new contexts — in this case from cathedral to monastic office, public to private reading — is a consistent practice in the Middle English devotional tradition: scribes and readers were constantly adjusting the subject positions and points of view of their manuscript sources in order to make them relevant to new textual circumstances.

Patristic models of reading remain integral throughout our period, and are joined by pastoral models for female religious and lay education as the vernacular spiritual tradition developed. Vulić's essay considers the role of reading in a popular text of pastoral instruction, the *summa* entitled *Speculum vitae*. Pastoral texts educated their readers in several areas: improving knowledge of church teachings, increasing the quantity and quality of devotional practices, and promoting the practical application of Christian ideals and teachings to the lived life in praxis. It is not just the act of reading but its effects on the readers and their lives that is significant in this tradition: readers read not only for information but also for self-improvement and, by extension, for the benefit of the wider community. As the lay population became more interested in cultivating personal piety at the end of the fourteenth century, the texts they read became not only more varied but also more interested in conveying complex ideas about doctrine and theology, as well as reading practices. In the early fifteenth century the parallel growth of the Mixed Life and Wycliffite movements modified traditional notions of lay readers and spiritual education, as Lewis's and Schirmer's chapters illustrate. Just as the Mixed Life practitioners adapted monastic and contemplative reading models for a general (vernacular-literate and wealthy) audience, so the Wycliffites challenged the vernacular tradition to revise existing pastoral models for new circumstances and the demands of readers influenced by contemporary academic and theological advances. The figure of the 'simple reader' recurs in many of the texts studied here — notably taken up by Lewis, Schirmer, and Uselmann — as it brought vernacular readers and their practices into a framework that did not separate readers by vocation but by intent and purpose. This concept could be used in a variety of contexts: the readers who are labelled as meek and 'buxom' in the treatment of Love's *Mirror* by Uselmann are described as proud and vain readers in Lewis's Wycliffite tracts, which saw Lollard readers as carrying the torch for simplicity. This approach

emphasized readerly obedience to the text, which if practised would illuminate the reader and bring her or him closer to God — a form of perfection thereby achievable to all readers who read the text as its writers demanded.

In the early decades of the fifteenth century, the gradually blurring categories of readers and the growing diversity of audiences resulted in a drive to produce a greater range of vernacular devotional texts, which in turn provided more methods of instruction and a larger number of models for readers and reading. Innes-Parker's essay illustrates the ways in which gendered reader models were being adapted in the fifteenth century, with antifeminist rhetoric coexisting with positive models of female piety. Innes-Parker's and Morley's chapters reveal that an important outcome of the female reader subcultures of late medieval England⁹ was the greater variety of women's roles in the production and dissemination of vernacular devotional texts by the end of our period. The two major figures of the woman reader of vernacular devotional literature — the female religious and her community, and the aristocratic lady — still maintained a significant symbolic value in the tradition but no longer represent the lived reality of many readers. The essays by Morley, Carlson, and myself highlight both the similarities and differences for readers and reading models in the new early print context. Early print books reflected the collaborative relationships among the authors, printers, and patrons required to produce the texts, and often returned to traditional figures of readers and reading — for example, brothers writing to sisters, and rich ladies reading and praying — at the same time that they sought a broad market base to support the printing venture financially. This mixture of old and new brings us full circle. The Middle English vernacular spiritual tradition was always negotiating between traditional authorities and traditions and the demands of its contemporary readers. It is out of these negotiations that the tradition was forged, and through them that it grew in our period until the Reformation.

For the remainder of the afterword I should like examine two patterns that emerge from the studies in this volume by introducing a textual example from the end of our period. The questions of Latinity and vernacularity and real and symbolic readers can be observed in a miracle story printed in 1519 by Wynkyn de Worde. 'A Devout Medytacyon in Sayenge Devoutly the Psalter of our Lady' was published in octavo with the 'Remedy Against Temptations', a popular Middle English advice treatise attributed to Richard Rolle.¹⁰ The tale offers

⁹ Riddy, "Women Talking about the Things of God".

¹⁰ 'A Devout Medytacyon'.

an *imitatio Magdalena* of the miraculous conversion of a prostitute, Katherine — who is an avid practitioner of the rosary — to a life of religion after she receives an intimate vision of Christ. Set in twelfth-century Rome, it recounts the effects of St Dominic preaching about ‘Our Lady’s Psalter’ (the original name of what was to become known as the rosary) and inciting ‘rosary fever’ among the lay populace. The tale is framed by Dominic’s influence but centres on a laywoman’s practice of the devotion about which he preaches. Katherine is swept up with the others but distinguishes herself for her dedication to the prayer beads not as a fashion statement but as a secret form of devotion: she hides her psalter beads under her clothing while performing them several times a day, meditating sequentially on the nativity, Jesus’s life, and the passion. On the one hand, concealing her beads means that her devotion neither detracts from her beauty (which has made her the most popular prostitute in the city) nor impedes her ability to make her livelihood (based as it is on being marked a sinner). On the other hand, her secretiveness is a rebuke to the prelates and nobles whose outward show of piety — displaying their beads prominently around their waists and in their hands — only brings them ‘some grace of almyghty god’ (fol. D.iii.^r) and does not inspire the miracles that Katherine’s secretive, inner conversion does.

The heart of Katherine’s story is the night she spends with Christ, who approaches her in the guise of a client as she plies her trade on the street and asks to return to her chambers. He differs from her other clients first for his beauty and then, during their dinner, for his transformative abilities: everything he touches ‘turned in to bloody colour with a meruayllous excellent smell & swete sauour’ (fol. D.iii.^r). It is when the couple retires to her bedchamber, after she has undressed, that Christ reveals himself to her, not in the manner of her usual clients but first as a little child, then as a grown man, and then as the son of God, all of which display the markers of the passion: the crown of thorns, the wounds, the cross, and the iconic tokens of the passion. Christ carefully connects the three-fold vision to Katherine’s practice of the rosary, and then exhorts her to convert from her sinful life. Katherine repents, confesses to Dominic, and inspires a stigmata-like conversion of a man from whose body gush miraculous fountains of water that nourish the church. She retires as a recluse and, in proper hagiographical romance-style, lives happily ever after.

One of the major topics revealed in the *Psalter* is the collaborative nature of Latin and vernacular cultures in this period. Monastic and academic Latinity not only provided texts for translation but also ways of reading and practising piety. The Pauline division of letter and spirit fostered the distinctions between readers who seek knowledge for personal gain and those who seek divine truth

for its own sake — a crucial division in late medieval debates about right reading, from the Middle English mystics and Wycliffites, to continental holy women, to the humanists. The monastic practice of *lectio divina* affirms the focus on wisdom over knowledge, requiring readers to slow down: one reads for quality not quantity, enlightenment not knowledge, mystery not mastery. Many of the later practices of vernacular reading, including meditation, prayer, and even translation, parallel the aims of the monastic *lectio*. In addition, the Augustinian paradigms of reading for divine illumination and reforming the soul in God's image also play an integral role in medieval reading models, shaping the ways in which the process of reading is envisioned as a physical action that affects the physiological and spiritual state of the reader. Bernard of Clairvaux takes up the idea of *ruminatio* in his influential treatment of affective reading, where allegorical reading brings out the fullness of the text. By annihilating one's own will and embracing God's will — often folded into three-fold practices of vernacular *lectio* — Bernard's followers stripped away the darkness in the glass reflecting God's image in themselves. Anselm's development of selective, affective reading made Bernard's model more adaptable, allowing readers to direct their own sequence of reading in texts to form their own 'act of self-understanding': always expected to harmonize with the goals of the community and authorities.¹¹

Just as monastic translations and adaptations brought these ideas to vernacular audiences, so academic advances — such as the Lollard and Humanist movements from England, and Gerson and the Devotio Moderna movements on the Continent — brought ways of reading out beyond the clerical class and the bounds of Latin culture and into the vernacular cultures of female religious and the laity.¹² These models were effectively adapted to the vernacular context as the pastoral role of Middle English spiritual writings sought to meet the needs of the female religious and pious lay readers. With the rise of Mixed Life piety and the wider dissemination of Middle English spiritual instruction starting in the later fourteenth century, relationships among vernacular readers had a larger influence on the dissemination of texts and manuscripts, and lay readers in their secular households became greater consumers of vernacular devotional writings. Growing audiences wanted to express their devotion through their practices, especially by acquiring and reading texts, performing devotions, and creating times and spaces for their spiritual activities. This demand brought

¹¹ See Uselmann's essay in this volume for further information on this Anselmian model.

¹² These movements receive ample treatment in our chapters, except for Gerson, who receives a passing mention in my essay. On Gerson, see Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity before Print*.

Latinity and vernacularity into a complementary relationship: it was not a one-way process from Latin to vernacular culture but a collaborative, mutually interdependent, and multifaceted system of exchange that was continually being renegotiated throughout our period.

The *Psalter* provides us with an excellent example of the transformative process of the negotiations between Latin and vernacular cultures in the late Middle Ages. The treatise — contrary to the information provided in its incipit, ‘Here begynneth a deuoute medytacyon in sayenge deuoutly þe psalter of our lady with dyuerse ensamples’ (D.ii.b) — is actually a miracle tale, translated from a collection of Latin exempla from Alanus de Rupe, a central figure in the cult of the rosary at the end of the Middle Ages.¹³ Latin and vernacular materials such as this miracle tale supported the spread of the popular, contemporary rosary cult. Although devotions and prayer beads to the Virgin Mary had been in use since the High Middle Ages, the practice of Our Lady’s Psalter and the Confraternity of the Rose became reinvigorated around 1475, inciting the use of prayer beads and printed rosary devotions in continental Europe as well as in England.¹⁴ Following the German *Unser lieben* tradition, a handful of English rosary texts were printed in the Low Countries as well as in England, often adding devotions to Jesus to the central core of prayers to Mary.¹⁵ The publication of our *Psalter* fits in with much of the other vernacular devotional materials being printed at the time since it helps to spread the rosary devotion, follows continental trends in devotions and printing, and inspires the reader to perform her/his devotions more piously.

The use of Latin authority in the text is worth noting. The text begins by citing two authorities for this tale: ‘mayster John of the mounte in hys moryall’ and ‘þe boke of frere Thomas of the temple’ are listed as sources provide this story (fol. D.ii.b). Winston-Allen remarks that John of the Mount is a fictitious

¹³ It is published with Michael Francisci’s compendium, *Quodlibet de veritate fraternitatis rosarii*. There is a Latin manuscript from Lyon (1488), *Rosarium virginis Mariae*, that includes this exemplum: Munich, Bavarian State Library, MS 4 Inc.c.a. 601 m, fols 39^{va}–41^{rb}. It is also included as ‘De Catherina Pulchra Romana, Prodigium’ in an 1847 edition of the works of Alanus de Rupe, *Opus vere aureum B. Alani Rupensis*, ed. by de la Roche, pp. 274–78.

¹⁴ On the tradition see Rhodes, *Private Devotion in England*, I, 369–89; Rhodes, ‘The Rosary in Sixteenth-Century England’; Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*; Miller, *Beads and Prayers*.

¹⁵ As Rhodes explains of another rosary text, *The Rosarye of Our Lady* (published in 1525 and 1537), ‘Yet, despite the important place held by the Mother of God in this work, the focus remains firmly on her son’ (Rhodes, *Private Devotion in England*, I, 373. So it is for our treatise.

attribution,¹⁶ but the allusion to Thomas of Cantimpré is significant (and he is mentioned again later when Dominic is pondering a vision he received, fol. D. vii.a) in order to assert again the veracity of the claims being made in this marvellous tale. A popular hagiographer, Thomas is associated with the coining of the term rosary for this devotion. Broadening the base of authorities here echoes what we have seen in the other essays in this collection: patristic and biblical authorities remain key throughout the late Middle Ages while the base expands to include authorities on devotions and traditions, founders of orders, and accounts of exemplars that provide relevant applications of Christian teachings.

The ways in which devotional communities developed and grew in late medieval England are reflected in the *Psalter* as well. Dominic's pastoral audience begins as a small, elite group of Rome-based 'grete prelates of the worlde' (fol. D.iii.a) but soon he is preaching to 'many persones not onely of the comyn people, but also of grete prelates of the chyrche as reverende cardynalles and many honoured bysshopes' (fol. D.iii.a). The cardinals and bishops are just as interested as the 'common people', and the devotion appeals to both religious and lay. The arrival of Dominic's devotion to the psalter is described as a fortuitous event, since 'the cyte beinge in trouble, dyverse multiplycayons of prayers was a monge the people in euery state or degre' (fol. D.iii.a). The rosary is thus represented as a unifying force for all citizens: 'for truly thou myght se bothe mornynge, evenynge, and at myddaye men and women everywhere berynge the psalter of our lady' (fol. D.iii.a). In this example we see the rise of communities of devotion that can cut across class and gender barriers; piety is not limited to the great prelates and the rich, but can be accessed by anyone. Thus, Latin and vernacular cultures of devotion are joined in the practices represented in this treatise. Simple, repetitive Latin prayers are organized through the use of prayer beads, which can be carried anywhere and performed virtually any time. Dominic's sermons can reach a wide audience as well and are not reserved solely for the elite. Devotion to Mary and Jesus had a popular appeal at all levels. The *Psalter* therefore presents an idealized collaboration between Latin and vernacular devotional cultures that is meant to instruct all practitioners: the appeal to clerical and monastic audiences comes in the role of Dominic inspiring this cult and Katherine's devotion to it, while the appeal to vernacular audiences is found in the gifts of grace given to Katherine.

Scholarship has focused on the conflicts of Latin and vernacular cultures to great effect, yet there is still much to understand about the ways in which Middle English spiritual practices emphasize unity in the negotiations among

¹⁶ Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*, p. 186 n. 2.

devotional cultures. Challenges to orthodoxy reveal themselves as oppositions, but the flow of ideas between spiritual traditions was generally considered a positive process, a view that remained constant as beliefs and practices continually changed. Control and stability are ideals, religious authority a symbol in a system that was becoming reader-driven and self-regulated. Continued interdisciplinary work will discover further commonalities between practices of Latin and vernacular spiritualities. Finally, further work in the field will continue to address these areas of negotiation throughout the chronology of our period, providing a more nuanced, fuller picture of the collaborations and oppositions among Latinities and vernacularities.

The construction of the audience and communities of readers is another key feature of this tradition. As a result of the rise of Mixed Life piety and the wider dissemination of Middle English spiritual instruction starting in the later fourteenth century, the male author/female reader model became less relevant to individual circumstances of readers: relationships among readers had a larger influence on the dissemination of texts and manuscripts, and lay readers in their secular households became greater consumers of vernacular devotional writings. The fifteenth-century manuscript history of Hilton's *Scale* and the *Mixed Life* (both their production and dissemination) demonstrates the ways in which such texts reached a wider audience in this period.¹⁷ Greater choices in texts and a growing separation between the actual reader's subject position in relation to the historical model led to more decision-making power being in the hands of readers, and less immediate pastoral surveillance and direction being in the hands of the authors.

In the *Psalter* we see a full range of spiritual subjects: from Dominic and the bishops, to churchgoers and lay townsfolk, to a prostitute and her converts. Within this diverse, urban, and devotional community, Katherine stands in for the everyman-sinner who will undergo conversion and repentance. Christ highlights this role at the end of Katherine's vision:

And here after amende thy selfe, that as thou were before the example of all malyce and unclene lyvyng, so now from this tyme forward lyve in suche maner that thou maye be to all other a myrroure of purete and clennes. I do not apere to the for thy merytes but onely for an example of penaunce, and bycause thy brethren and systeres of myn undefyled moders fraternyte have prayed for the, that by thy conversacyon many sholde be converted and by the chyldren of god. (fol. D.vi.^r)

¹⁷ See, for instance, Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. by Sargent, 'Introduction', pp. 1–163; Sargent, *De cella in seculum*; Sargent, Oguro, and Beadle, eds, *Nicholas Love at Waseda*.

Katherine's role as exemplar is explained further by Mary in her explication to Dominic: 'Shewe that I have purchased of my sone to all suche as sayth my psalter and are of my fraterne, they shal have the same excellence whiche the sayd katherine hath' (fol. D.viii.^r). The exemplary role of Katherine is encouraged by Dominic, who endorses Katherine's visions and conversion as a means of furthering the cult of the Rosary. Furthermore, Katherine's profession as a prostitute strengthens her exemplary status, recalling the biblical model of Mary Magdalene as a favoured follower of Christ — whose later, apocryphal career as a hermit also foreshadows Katherine's future as a recluse and visionary.

Just as Dominic's audience is made up of persons of all estates and degrees, so Katherine herself plays many roles in the treatise: the unrepentant sinner who 'used the unlawfull fleshly pleasure and uncleannes of her body' (fol. D iii.^r) and lives and works in a brothel; the beautiful lady who attends church every day, is devoted to her name saint, and secretly practices the rosary, 'which she hydde vnder her kyrtell and sayde it many tymes on þe day' (fol. D. iii.^v); the unworthy female vessel to whom Christ appears in a vision; and finally the holy woman who becomes a recluse, teacher, and visionary. Dominic is not given priority over Katherine in this treatise: although it is his influence that leads to her conversion, the vision he receives is secondary, explicating the influence Katherine is making through her devotion to the rosary. The *Psalter* suggests that there is no such thing as well-defined categories of religious and lay devotional practices because Dominic's vocation is to preach to religious and lay alike, and everyone practises the psalter. A prostitute receives a holy vision from Christ, and Dominic receives a holy vision about a prostitute. As a recluse Katherine does not isolate herself from others but meets with other holy women, teaches young women, and converts sinners. In this way spiritual practices are represented as idealized communal activities that bring everyone together in a shared ritual.

Katherine presents a model of contemporary female piety that would have resonated deeply with the audience. Scholars such as Ann Clark Bartlett and Elizabeth Robertson¹⁸ have eloquently described the devotional model of the male author and female reader: the male religious 'author' of the manuscript — whether creator, scribe, translator, compiler — knows the female religious reader of the manuscript for whom he prepares it. Yet in spite of (or perhaps because of) the patriarchal control built into this paradigm, there was an implied mutual respect and reciprocity in the relationship: it is through the reader's invi-

¹⁸ Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*; Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose*, and "This Living Hand".

tation that the author creates the text and provides guidance. Readers are represented as being guided by authors in making meaning from the text and there is little room for misinterpretation. The texts themselves provide much of the direction for the reader, and it is implied that the pastoral relationship between the author and reader will supplement any further direction for the reader. As texts circulated more widely in manuscripts and books, the originary author-reader pairing was replicated or adapted for new circumstances, and in this way the original reader paradigm was maintained as a starting point, becoming a model that may or may not describe the circumstances of the actual authors and readers. These discussions successfully projected the ideal relationship between the book, author, and reader, as well as detailing the optimal correlations not only between reading and praying and meditating but also between text and practice, producing an imagined space for contemplative reading and prayer.

Scholarship on historical readers, such as the excellent work by Alexandra Barratt and Mary Erler, and on individual manuscripts, such as Marleen Cré's and Jennifer N. Brown's recent books, has provided essential information on book ownership and use in our period; work on symbolic readers, such as that by Vincent Gillespie, Brian Stock, and D. H. Green, has also played an important role in the field.¹⁹ Future work will continue to fill in our understanding of real and symbolic readers, illustrating the multiple reader models that were available in Middle English spiritual writings. Connections with continental models and ideas will increase in importance, finessing our considerations of the collaborative nature of author-reader models (consider the collection edited by Mooney and Connolly, for instance).²⁰ Finally, we shall see greater evidence that the discussions of religious orthodoxy and heresy, and/or gender and piety espoused in traditional author-reader models, are opened up for negotiation in many of these texts, at the same time that they support and contest the reading models themselves.

To conclude I will offer two final thoughts. If the miracle story is a tale about communities, then Dominic's urban community — identified by joining the confraternity and praying the psalter — shows the universalizing effects of piety. Katherine's example shows that not only is there room for everyone, but

¹⁹ Barratt, *Anne Bulkeley and her Book*; Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*; Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse*; *Three Women of Liege*, ed. by Brown; Gillespie, *Looking in Holy Books*; Stock, *Implications of Literacy*; Stock, *After Augustine*; and Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*.

²⁰ Mooney and Connolly, eds, *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts*.

also everyone can find a room: Katherine goes from living in a brothel with other prostitutes to being enclosed as a recluse, making a spiritual community with other holy persons, and finally attracting three holy virgins as witnesses to her death. Katherine is shown making her piety her own throughout the tale, appearing as an active subject in many situations. Dominic's authority incites Katherine's fervour, but it is Katherine who becomes an agent of miracles and a site of transformation herself, both the recipient of revelation as well as producing and activating change. I wish to suggest that we can read this tale (and Katherine herself) as emblematic of the transformative powers of vernacular piety. It not only translates and emulates Latin practices but it can produce vernacular practices: just as Katherine's psalter devotion results not only in her vision of Christ but also her anchoritic vocation and influence on the experiences of others. These practices transform and multiply, responding to Latin authorities while creating vernacular expertise, becoming distinctly their own as they engage with the inherited traditions. It is the reformed prostitute capable of miracles (and by extension her practices and works) who thus represents the generative and transformative capabilities of the vernacular devotional traditions that we have studied in this volume.

The collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of scholarship on our topic dovetails nicely with the ways in which devotional texts were being produced and read in the late Middle Ages. Studies of social and political history, religion and theology, book history, literary analysis and history, and of gender, household, and devotional space all contribute to our understanding of how authors, readers, printers, patrons, and others interacted with the books they made, read, or heard; the ways in which piety was expressed through these actions; and in what manners readers and reading negotiated the beliefs and practices of their time. The foundations of this field began more than fifty years ago, growing in the subsequent decades, as we seek to construct the broader picture of late medieval symbolic and actual devotional readers and reading practices. The research on the history of manuscripts and early books began in earnest in the 1950s and 1960s and continues to today; reader and reception studies as well as the studies of the Lollards became strong in the 1970s and 1980s; scholarly interest in gender and textual production and reception rose in the 1980s and 1990s; and work continues on individual manuscripts, communities, and libraries in this millennium. Today the challenge is in contributing meaningfully to and integrating effectively the many findings in our field: the greater body of work and larger understanding of the nuances in the field have made our scholarship richer. Now we must find the best ways of acknowledging and enhancing this richness in our own work.

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